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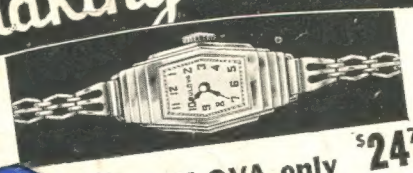

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Cover by Hubert Rogers
Headings by I. B. Hazelton, Neil O'Keeffe
Howard V. L. Bloomfield, Editor

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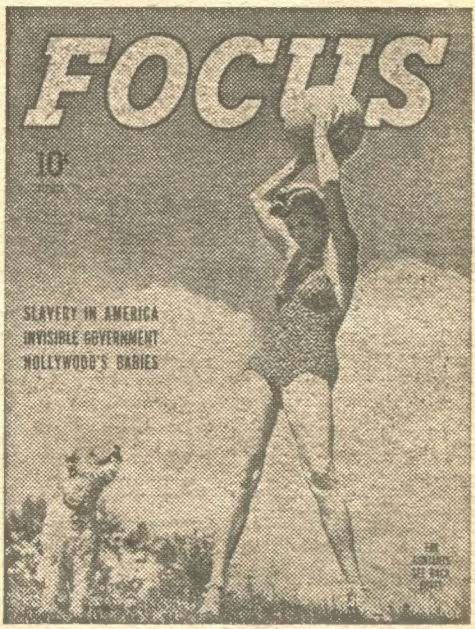

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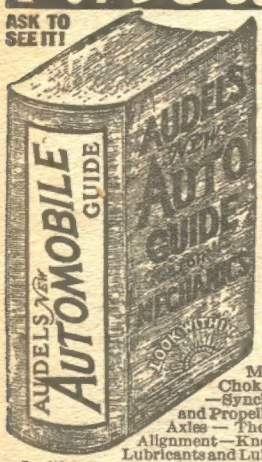

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LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or the fates. For the benefit of the friend you seek, give your own name and full address if possible. All inquiries along this line, unless otherwise designated, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, every inquiry addressed to "Lost Trails" will be run in three consecutive issues.

Word wanted of Jack Oliver Hanlon, who left his home in Seattle, Wash., Oct. 23, 1932, and was a regular reader of *Adventure*. Notify his mother, Mrs. W. F. Hanlon, 2321 Fairview No., Seattle, Wash.

Any man who served with Ambulance Company No. 3, First Sanitary Train, First Division, A. E. F., write Archibald B. Oliver, 1747 Kentucky Street, Lawrence, Kansas.

Craig D. Hanson, who left Portland, Oregon, in 1935. Word wanted by G. P. Sylvester, 9535 S.E., Harold St., Portland, Oregon.

Where is Napier Mearns Crosett, his friend, J. Monte Dunstan, 51 South Beaver Street, York, Penn., queries.

Will "Sarge" Ralph Kingsley of Military Specialist Company, A.P.O. 727, write to "Kid" Collins Ewing, Odessa, Mo.

Captain Fred Ewing, Ex-Marine of Santo Domingo, please get in touch with Mrs. Sarrah Olson of 2103 N.W., Hoyt St., Portland, Oregon, or Ethel Ewing, 136-19th St., E., Holland, Michigan.

Eugene Barry, in 1912 Chief Steward *S. S.* Byron, New York to S. America. Later heard of in New York and in the Middle West. His brother, William Barry, Tweenways, East End, Lymington, Hampshire, England, would welcome any news.

LOST TRAILS

Richard H. Wells, Box 154, Clearwater, Florida, seeks news of his friend Lee (Bill) Elliot. Last heard from was in 1922, New York State.

Wm. P. Liebenrod, who worked on construction of Madera-Mamore Railway, last heard from at Puerto Veljo, Brazil, in 1914, please send word to G. C. Hagermann, 700 South Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles.

Mrs. Beatrice Stafford Grigsby, Box 203, Paintsville, Ky., wants word of her son, Jesse John Stafford Franklin, who worked in Akron, Ohio, as John Stafford, for Goodyear Rubber Co., last heard of ten years ago.

Word wanted of Calvin William (Slim) Brown, once of Ranger, Texas. By Issac Simmons, Bloom, Kansas.

Ralph Cornwall or Cornwell, formerly of "American Legion" in Canadian Army, transferred to Intelligence service, reported caught in Germany and shot. Lately reported living. Old Buddy, Wayne G. Putnam, R.R. 3, Dayton, Ohio, would like word.

Charles W. Cantrell, 8231 Germantown Ave., Phildelphia, wants word of Lieut. John Lewin and O'Neil Sievere.

Henry D. McGregor, 1708 Baker Avenue, Everett, Wash., wants to hear from an old shipmate, Gilford John Colvin, pharmacist's mate U.S.N. 1918-1919, later in Spokane, Wash.

U. E. Chase, 308 No. Central Ave., Glendale, Cal., wants to locate an old friend, Mr. J. E. Harrison, who was located at 42-43 Cranbourne St., London, W.C., England, about 1920. His real name is Charles G. Guenthart, which he changed for business purposes after going to England.

Information wanted concerning Frederick J. Gerkin, now 38, formerly with White Star Navigation Co. and Chrysler Motor Co., Detroit, Mich. Last heard from July 1, 1929, by letter mailed from Port Huron, Mich., to his mother, now dead. Communicate with C. M. Holmquist, Hays, Kansas.

Douglas H. Woodworth, formerly corporal, Company L, 28th Infantry, First Division, A.E.F., is anxious to locate or get word of an old buddy, Sergeant Thomas M. Finley of the same outfit, and would appreciate letters from any other overseas members of Company L.

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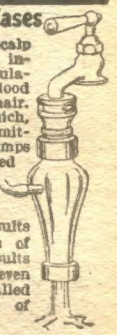

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NEVER MIND THE GUARD

A NOVELETTE

By ALLAN VAUGHAN ELSTON

"STRIPES" MURPHY was tired of standing there, on the hot end of the Zamboanga pier, holding binoculars to his eyes as he gazed westerly across the Sulu Sea.

"It's a pain in the neck!" he growled to Haliburton.

Lt. Roscoe Haliburton, in his most stiffly starched Marine Corps uniform, felt himself no less abused than Murphy. For an hour the two had been sweltering, with the sun like a blast furnace and the planking all but afire underfoot. Haliburton said accusingly: "What we get for shooting off your mouth!"

"Stripes," so called not only because he had come up from the ranks but because of an uncanny collection of wound and service stripes, now lowered the binoculars to mop a sleeve across perspiring eyes. With an irony of saccharine sweetness he remarked: "So here we are, all dressed up—official reception committee for dear little Virgie!"

"She's overdue." Haliburton looked at his wrist watch, adding with a touch

"Is there no one else—to take me?"

of bright optimism: "If she doesn't show a wing pretty soon, means she's playing tag with the sharks."

"These Sulu Sea sharks shake a mean fin, too," said Murphy, not without the same suggestion of relish.

As a rule they couldn't agree. Hard-faced Stripes Murphy was usually at loggerheads with good looking "Roscoe-the-Lady-Killer" Haliburton. Lt. Murphy still looked like a top kick and always would, whereas Haliburton had been born, literally, under crossed sabers at West Point.

But here at last was something they could get together on. Each man was definitely unsympathetic toward young girls who insisted upon flying around the world for the thrill of it. Especially when the girl was Virginia Dreece, worth thirty millions according to the rotogravures, and who, Murphy insisted, liked nothing better than to have armies, navies and marine corps stand by with drums rolling while she darted hither and yon between continents. Remarks to which effect at staff-breakfast this morning had drawn sc[illegible] the major, with a curt: "Mu[illegible] and Haliburton better doll up[illegible] by to receive Miss Dreece."

"Here comes Sergeant Richter," Murphy now observed. "Funny how he can run like that in this climate. Me, I couldn't do it. Not if they court-martialed me, Roscoe."

Richter, saluting, handed forth the latest wireless communication from Virginia Dreece's oncoming plane.

"Lat. 8 degrees north, long. 117," it reported.

"I've plotted the position, sir," offered Richter. "It's just off the north tip of Borneo, in Balabac Strait."

"Puts her more than three-fourths the way here from Singapore," Haliburton calculated.

Murphy nodded listlessly. This jump from Singapore to Zamboanga was, he knew, only about twelve hundred miles and so should not be especially hazardous.

Her tomorrow's hop to Guam would be a trifle wider, something like sixteen hundred.

Murphy understood also that Virginia Dreece was not out after speed records. She was scheduled to spend the night here as a guest of the major's wife, and if tomorrow's weather conditions were not promising she would linger on longer. She simply wanted to be the first woman to fly around the world on an approximately equitorial route.

"I think I see her, sir!" Sergeant Richter was pointing.

Murphy trained his glasses on a speck in the western sky.

"Not a Dreece crate," he reported. "Must be the sultan, on a hop from Sulu."

Haliburton took the binoculars. After a look he agreed that the oncoming spec was not the *Lady Bird,* Virginia Dreece's much advertised twin-motor hydroplane.

"You're right, Stripes. It's the sultan's one-seater."

THE Zamboanga marines were in the habit of dubbing Jolo Palawan "The Sultan", although Palawan laid no present claim to the title. Actually he was a high-caste Moro of wealth and influence, a cosmopolite and an Oxford graduate who was just as likely to be found at a football game in the Yale bowl or lolling on the beach at Waikiki.

"Always on the go, the sultan is," Murphy observed. "Guess it's the pirate blood in him."

Undeniably Jolo Palawan was a scion of pirate potentates—those Sulu sultans who for centuries had been the scourage of Melanasian waters. A bold and adventurous race, the Mohammedan Malays. And none bolder than Jolo Palawan, who came now skimming along cloud lanes to Zamboanga.

"Better tip the adjutant, Richter," Murphy suggested.

Off trotted Richter to report at Marine headquarters the imminent arrival of Palawan.

"Means we'll have him for supper," prophesied Haliburton, "along with dear little Virgie."

Palawan was now gliding downward toward the bay. His graceful little monoplane, the *Swallow,* struck the water with barely a splash and came smoothly on toward the main mole. Out went the harbor master's tug to give him a tow.

By now the entire town was surging toward the piers. Moros and Visaya Filipinos, Spanish *mestizos* and Yankee marines. Sloping eyed girls aroused from their siestas to peer from barred windows. Chinese merchants emerged from the shops in the wake of customers, Moslem and Christian, as word spread that a plane had landed in the bay.

Most of them thought it was the American girl. Everyone knew of her take-off from Singapore at dawn. And now they were disappointed when the arriver was seen to be only Jolo Palawan.

For Palawan, great personage though he was, was no novelty. Frequently he had pased through en route to the races at Manila, where he kept a stable, or to the joss games of Hong Kong, or via Guam and Wake to the playgrounds of Hawaii.

The harbor master brought him to the mole. Jolo Palawan appeared there

suave and smiling, immaculate as always, a slim and elegant Malay gentleman who fed well on adulation.

A vain man. If there was one thing he liked better than anything else, it was an impressive entrance. Passionately he courted attention. So now he was especially gratified at the great crowds assembling on piers and beaches.

"There she comes!" voices shouted.

Officers in starched whites came briskly toward the landing. Brown folk and white stood agape, not at Jolo Palawan, but at some star of greater magnitude now shooting from the sky upon Zamboanga.

The *Lady Bird*, piloted by Virginia Dreese, had at last been sighted.

And Jolo Palawan found himself utterly ignored. A messenger from the Filipino governor who had been advancing to hold a sunshade over Palawan now stopped, to stand staring out at sea. It was the same with all others. The marine adjutant, coming along to invite Jolo to dinner at the major's tonight, became likewise diverted. Every eye was on the great twin-motored bird which, with its silvery spread of wings flashing sunlight, came swooping to the bay.

A tension as Virginia Dreece made skillful landing. Then a salvo of cheering in many tongues. The marine band formed on the beach to sound off. A salute of one gun came from the old stone fort which had been inherited by Yankees from Spaniards. Then the marine band, inspired by information that Miss Dreece hailed originally from Louisville, began playing "She Was Bred in Old Kentucky."

All of which vastly irritated Murphy.

"Bet she thinks she's impo
muttered to Haliburton. "H
thirty millions." The two v
a launch out to meet the *Lac*

"She doesn't think it; she
said Haliburton.

Murphy's jaw took its toughest angle. "If she offers to tip you, smack her down."

THE launch eased in back of a great glistening wing.

The cockpit door wasn't open yet.

"The marines!" came in mock alarm from within. The school-girlish impudence of the voice irked Murphy more than ever. Next he heard the same voice exclaim, with a giggle: "Look, Maxie! They've turned out the guard!"

She was flying with an observer, they knew, by the name of Max Raff.

"Importunate, brash, and altogether too fresh!" Murphy murmured to Haliburton.

Again they heard impish raillery from Miss Dreece. "What do I do, Maxie? Do I salute?"

That was quite too much for Murphy.

"What did I tell you, Roscoe?" he whispered. "She thinks she's General Pershing."

They heard Max Raff say gruffly: "You look like a tramp, Virg."

The door opened and Murphy saw her there—quite like a pert little tramp. She wore overalls and had a smudge of oil on her nose. The nose was small and uptilted between a willful mouth and a rakishly askew flying cap, all of which completed to Murphy his preconceived picture of fortune's spoiled child. In the rotogravures she'd appeared more like a Dresden doll. This pert, vagabondish touch, he thought now, was a contrast calculated to impress more than ever the gawking leathernecks of Zamboanga.

"Thinks she's knocking us dead!" Murphy whispered from a corner of his mouth to Haliburton.

Then he stood up in the boat and touched his cap.

"Compliments of Major and Mrs. Carmichael," he said, "and may we take you ashore?"

"Yes, you sweet boys," said Virginia.

Murphy's face went bloodless.

"Censored! Understand?" He hissed in Spanish to Haliburton.

Haliburton, no less indignant, quite

understood. If the Marine r found out that this chit of a g heiress had said to them, "Y t boys," both of them woul c- cheered out of the service. d they ever live it down.

"Perfectly darling of you," said Virginia, making it worse. Stripes stepped forward, acidly polite, to help her down. But she jumped into the boat unassisted, then turned to call back, "Coming, Maxie?"

Max Raff, an ungainly man with a sad, stern face, appeared in the doorway.

"Thanks, fellows," he said. "Just take her off my hands, will you, till I see to the refuelling? I see a tow coming. Right? I'll show up later."

Murphy liked Raff instantly. Knew how to put her in her place, Raff did.

Raff tossed Virginia's bag down to a Filipino boy in the launch. Another boy shaded the girl with an umbrella, while a third grinned as he held open the door of a tiny shelter cabin aft. Virginia waved cheerily to Raff as the launch backed away from the wings. Then she produced a hundred dollar vanity case from her one dollar overalls and erased the smear from her nose.

"Might as well get out of this sun, Miss Dreece," Murphy suggested.

He conducted her to the shelter cabin and left her there, returning forward to take the wheel from Haliburton.

"*You* nurse-maid her from now on, Roscoe. I'm through."

"She needs discipline," agreed Haliburton. "If we only had her in the marines—"

"If she were mine," swore Stripes Murphy, "I'd keep her in a convent on bread and water."

The roll of the boat gave him an idea.

"Listen," he suggested wistfully. "One of us 'll have to hand her overside to the mole. Nice swell there, and we'll be bouncing. If we only dared," he finished with a sigh, "it would brighten the rest of my life."

Haliburton saw it at once.

"But we'd never get away with it," he objected.

"We *could*," Murphy insisted. "It'd look like an accident, wouldn't it, with the boat bouncing? We'd fish her out, of course, and boost her to the pier."

"A nice scum on the water around those pilings, too," admitted Haliburton. Still, the idea was a trifle too rough for him. Having never been a top kick, he lacked a bit of Murphy's hard-boiled ruthlessness.

"Look, Roscoe," Murphy urged, "long as we live we'll never get a chance like this. One of us hands her to the dock—and the space between gunwale and dock suddenly splits, like it always does when you try to get off a boat. Neat little push with your foot'll do it. And down goes dear little Virgie, into scummy water!"

"I'm afraid—" Haliburton began doubtfully.

"You're yellow!" taunted Murphy.

That, among marines, was a fighting word.

"Am I? Okay, Stripes. You're so tough, I'll just match you to see who does it."

They produced coins, matching covertly as the launch drew near the mole. All Zamboanga was on that mole and adjacent beaches. The major was there, and the major's lady. Beyond them was formed the marine band, drums rolling.

"You lose!" Murphy said with a sigh. "Just my luck. And I wanted to duck her myself."

Haliburton wasn't one to welch. He proceeded aft to the cabin and entered there, to conduct the girl ashore.

BUT once inside the shelter cabin, Lt. Roscoe Haliburton was amazed to find Virginia collapsed on the board bench. She was sleeping soundly, like an exhausted child.

"Come, please. We're at the pier now."

She did not move. Only when he shook her arm did she come awake.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, sitting up to rub her eyes guiltily. "You won't tell Maxie, will you, please?"

"Tell Maxie what?"

"That I went to sleep. I mean—"

"What difference does it make?"

"Oh, to me it means *so* much!" Virginia stood up and laid a pleading hand on his arm. "You see, he's su[illegible] old maid. And mother hade him p[illegible] call the flight off, or at least to the controls himself, if I g[illegible] tired."

"Your observer, you mean?" questioned Haliburton. Looking down into her eyes now, he saw her in quite a new light.

"That's it. You see, so far I've been pilot every inch of the way. And we've only four more little hops—Guam, Wake, Honolulu, San Diego. I do so want to finish what I start, don't you see?"

Haliburton saw. "You're dead on your feet and Raff doesn't know it. Sure, I get you. If he had the foggiest idea of how all in your are, he'd either call off the flight or take over the controls himself."

"Yes, that's it. He promised mother. And so I've got to keep him from finding out. He almost did, this time, though. That's why I had to talk fast and fresh and smart, like I was bubbling over with the old pep, just now. You must have thought I was frightfully silly, didn't you?"

The launch jolted against the pilings of the pier.

And Haliburton answered with fervor: "If you ask me, I think you're just about as game as they make 'em, Miss Dreece." If this assurance was awkward, it lacked nothing in earnestness. His estimate of the guest having completely somersaulted, Lt. Haliburton stood in sackcloths and ashes. He burned with contrition for having even considered such a monstrous proposal as Murphy's.

"You won't tell anyone I went to sleep?" she begged. "Not even him!" Her nod was in the direction of Stripes Murphy.

"Not on a bet," promised her conductor.

Murphy saw them emerge from the cabin. On the governor's mole the band again sounded off. New cheers filled the air as Haliburton made ready to disembark with Virginia Dreece.

Murphy stood aloof, watching with anticipation. He glanced down with sly approval at scummy waves now slapping, with each bounce of the boat, against barnacled pilings. Then he looked at the girl, so slim and childish in her overalls, and felt a twinge of conscience. But he hardened his heart. Teach her a lesson, it would.

Haliburton had her on the gunwale now. When the gap suddenly widened, it would all look like an accident. What a splash! And why break down and cry about anybody with thirty millions and a swelled head?

Then Murphy stood staring incredulously. He saw his confederate pick Virginia up as tenderly as though she were an invalid, and with gentle caution set her feet securely on the mole.

The starkness of this treachery benumbed Murphy. His petrification was so complete that he forgot to trail along as Haliburton gallantly conducted his charge to the major's wife.

All Zamboanga witnessed the presentation. Forgotten in the background stood Jolo Palawan. An attendant from the governor's still failed to remember his errand to shade Palawan from the sun. The marine adjutant still was diverted from his purpose of inviting Palawan to supper. For this proudest of all the Moro moguls it was a total eclipse.

Off down the mole marched the band, rendering a selection made famous by marine bands the world over and oddly apt for this particular post—"The Monkeys Have No Tails in Zamboanga."

Behind the band went the major, the major's lady and Virginia Dreece. After these surged the cheering crowd.

All, that is, except Haliburton. For Haliburton was being detained brusquely by Murphy.

"What's the idea?" demanded Murphy. "We matched, didn't we? And you lost, didn't you!"

"Listen, Stripes," Haliburton argued, "we were heels to frame a deal like that. We had her wrong—she's a swell little guy."

"Oh! So that's it!" Murphy's irony was blistering. "Made a calf out of you, did she, all the two minutes! You big tough marine, you!"

"Now don't get sore, Stripes. Listen. When I went in there she was—" Haliburton clamped his lips on the revelation. He'd promised her he wouldn't tell anyone—not even Murphy.

His sincerity appeared to mollify Murphy.

"Well," Murphy said with a shrug, "if you fell for her, you fell for her. Guess it's just one of those things. Tell you what, Roscoe. You ran out on me—but I'll settle for a gin *pahit* over at the Arab's."

Stripes sighed and cast a longing eye toward a pub known as the Arab's Oasis, across the bay.

Eager to settle so cheaply, and to recover standing as a man among marines, Haliburton agreed at once. "Okay, Stripes. I'll buy you two *pahits*. With cracked ice if you like, seeing you're all hot under the collar." The launch was still alongside the mole and he led his comrade toward it.

Together they stepped from mole to gunwale, Haliburton totally unprepared for a slight push Murphy gave with his foot. A gap widened, and Haliburton, caught off balance, fell with a splash into scummy water.

He came up sputtering.

Murphy quickly pushed off, started the motor and shot away from the mole. As he headed toward the Arab's he pantomined a sipping of cool *pahits*. Then he blew back a derisive kiss toward Haliburton.

Haliburton, floundering there by the pilings, managed to get one soggy arm above the surface. His clenched fist shook at Murphy and he shouted: "You double-crosser!"

"Well of all the nerve!" mocked Murphy. "Calling *me* a double-crosser!"

Snaggy

AS the tropic night fell, servants flitted to and fro across the major's patio lighting Chinese lanterns. Seductive odors floated about, from rich wines and viands and from numerous little pots of incense. A long white table, bedecked with fruit and flowers and sheltered by tall cocoanut palms, was set for more than a score of people. A stringed orchestra strummed softly in the shadows.

The major and his wife stood at the patio gate, greeting guests as they arrived. Each in turn was presented to Miss Virginia Dreece and her observer, Max Raff. Virginia had enjoyed a three-hour nap in the guest chamber. Now, in a filmy gown of pale green, she seemed to be completely refreshed. Marine officers passed down the line with heads up, all of them devastatingly impressed except Stripes Murphy.

"Too Ritzy!" was still Murphy's stubborn verdict.

The adjutant twitted him. "What's the matter, Stripes? Burned up because Roscoe took all the bows?"

"Listen, leathernecks," Murphy assured a group of them, "after she knocks you all dead she'll yawn and say: 'Relax, soldier boys. At ease! Nighty-night. And never mind the guard!' "

Other guests appeared, notably Governor Manuel Torres and Senora Torres. Last of all come Jolo Palawan.

His slim elegance set off by a white dress suit tailored in London, Mindanao's number one taxpayer entered

with a flourish, like a prince of the blood. He bowed from the hips before the major's wife, and again before Virginia Dreece.

"Every inch a sultan!" remarked Roscoe Haliburton aside to the adjutant. Although they had never taken Jolo too seriously, the marines knew quite well that compared to Jolo Palawan, the Filipino governor, Torres, was but small fry.

Major Carmichael offered his arm to Virginia and led toward the feast. Jolo followed with the major's wife. Beyond this it was a shuffle. The men far outnumbering ladies, no definite partners had been assigned. Purely because he was greeting her at the moment, Stripes Murphy found himself stranded with Senora Torres. No choice but to offer her his arm. Graciously she accepted it. Murphy tried to look happy despite the lady's three chins and two hundred pounds.

Neither had place cards been arranged on the table, due to rather delicate problem in rank. In the Orient a guest's importance varies with the distance he is placed from the guest of honor. Mortification at being unfairly ranked, in public, might bring on anything from suicide to civil war. And yet how could Jolo Palawan be given precedence over Governor Torres, or vice versa? Officially Torres, appointee of the new independent legislature at Manila, was the greater. But this was Mindanao, empire of the proud Moros. And of all the Moros, the most distinguished was Jolo Palawan.

All neatly solved by a diplomatic commander of American marines who, as host, took the guest of honor himself and let the others find places by happy chance. Except that Senora Torres didn't believe in happy chances. Not when her husband was governor and Jolo Palawan had barely nodded her way, after bowing from the hips to others.

And not when she remembered that she, a Visayan from Luzon, came of a race which for centuries had been taken at will as slaves by the fierce Moslem Moros. So Stripes Murphy found himself being firmly maneuvered. Just how it was managed he could never tell, but there he was, seated between Senora Torres and Virginia Dreece.

Having won this battle, the governor's wife gave no further attention to anything but the food and wine.

Virginia turned engagingly toward Murphy. "You disappeared this afternoon, Lieutenant, before I could thank you."

"Don't thank me; thank the C.O.," said Murphy. He added with a frozen smile, "The major heard Haliburton and me raving about you, so he sent us to meet your plane."

"Raving?" Her eyes searched for a double meaning.

"Raving," he said without a tremor.

"Are you in the habit," she asked curiously, "of raving about girls you never saw before?"

"No," he said. "This is the first time." Once more she could take it either way.

Although piercing the mask of his antagonism, she pretended not to.

"Aren't you afraid," she inquired sweetly, "that you'll turn my head?"

"No, Miss Dreece." He said it so quickly that she could hardly miss, although she could never prove, his meaning.

Her cheek flushed. Then she did turn her head—away from Murphy and toward the major.

"YOU'LL follow the coast ine around Mindanao, of ourse," Carmichael said to ier, "tomorrow when you fly toward Guam?"

"Why not strike straight over the island?" she countered absently. Her mind was still grappling with Murphy's rudeness.

"It's a bigger island than you realize," the major smiled. "All most twice as big as Ireland, and a million times wilder."

"But as I remember the chart," she objected, "we can save a hundred miles by heading straight east over the mountains."

"You could, but you'll be wise to keep to the shore lines, Miss Dreece. There's a trible or two in the interior of Mindanao compared to which the head-hunting Bontoks and Igorrotes of Luzon are mere sissies." The major cocked an eyebrow and spoke past her to Murphy. "That's right, isn't it, Lieutenant?"

"Absolutely," said Murphy to the back of her head.

His tone was so superior that Virginia felt a stubborn impulse to ignore the advice and fly straight over the mountains.

What if there were crocodiles and pythons and wild natives? She wouldn't need to land, would she?

When she ventured to suggest this, the major said: "No flyer can tell when he'll have to land. In the interior, with your hydroplane, you could land only on a lake. Chances are there'd be no lake at the right place. Even if there were, you'd have to tramp into some pagan village."

"Where I suppose they'd take good care of us," the girl said. "These Filipinos are so polite, don't you think?"

Carmichael agreed with her. With sincerity he tossed bouquets at the Filipinos in general. He praised their rapid advance in culture, commerce and self government.

Nevertheless, he explained, they couldn't all be judged by typ[illegible] like [illegible] Palawan.

Certain of the mountain[illegible] he insisted, were still untam[illegible]

"The Moros?" she asked.

"Moro simply means Moor," Carmichael told her. "So the Mohammedan Malays are called Moros. For centuries they made a systematic business of piracy and slave trading. The Spaniards came, saw—but in four hundred years failed to conquer the Moros."

"And now?"

"Most of them by choice have become peaceful citizens. But a few isolated tribes high in the mountain bush still recognize only the law of spear and bolo.

"They're far closer kin, these mountain Malays, to the Dyaks of Borneo than to the mill run of Filipinos."

"In that case," she laughed, "I won't pay them a visit."

"The worst of it," the major went on, "is that if you did we couldn't even send a search party inland to look for you."

When her eyes questioned he explained further: "We're just a detachment of marines on temporary duty here at Zambo, making coastal surveys for a possible American naval base—less vulnerable than Manila, and better located for cooperation with the British at Singapore."

"But in 1934 we gave the Philippines independence, didn't we?'

"Which is just the point. The ruling party at Manila doesn't particularly like our barging back here with marines, even away down south here on Mindanao. So we tread lightly. We've promised for one thing, to keep out of the interior."

"I see. So I mustn't embarrass you by crashing in the jungle," laughed Virginia.

"Exactly."

Murphy said again to the back of her head: "The marine corps would go into mourning, but that's as far as we could go."

She wanted to wither that young man. Why couldn't he be nice, like the rest of them? And especially like his friend, Lt. Haliburton.

As for the matter of route tomorrow, she wanted to drop it. But Murphy kept it alive by appealing down table to Max Raff.

"Your pilot wants to take a short cut over the mountain. Better veto that. What?"

Raff agreed emphatically. The lieutenant was perfectly right, he said.

WINE was served then. The major, standing, toasted the guest of honor. Max Raff responded for his flyer, toasting burton bell.

Stopping there would have been bad diplomacy. So Carmichael's adjutant quickly proposed long life to the Philippine government. This brought Torres to his feet with "The Stars and Stripes." Jolo Palawan, smiling across table at Virginia, said gracefully: "To the last frontier, the airways between sky and sea." And so it went on, to the growing concern of Max Raff.

Raff was a practical man, and last night they had gone through the same thing at Singapore.

Faces, he saw, were already getting flushed. Max Raff continued to watch the girl fretfully. In a little while he heard that sleek, Oxford-bred pirate from Sulu say to her: "I also, Miss Dreece, shall fly tomorrow to Guam."

"And on to America?" she asked.

"Only to Hawaii, this time."

The two talked flying across the table, while the mozos brought more wine.

"Your longest hop to date, Miss Dreece?"

"Brazil to Liberia," she said. "But we finish with another one about that wide—Honolulu to San Diego."

Jolo Palawan, himself an adventurer and a gambler, applauded with a smile which exposed the whitest teeth she had ever seen. "A hazard, Miss Dreece. But in your frontier, and mine, we laugh at hazards."

"What time in the morning, Mr. Palawan, will you be taking off for Guam?"

Soon after dawn, he said, so that the sixteen hundred miles could be flown before dark with a margin.

"We also will take off soon after dawn," said Virginia.

He sipped his wine, then challenge. "I shall be waiting at Guam."

"You think so?"

"My *Swallow* is swift," insisted Palawan. "Most surely it shall beat you to Guam."

When she made no response, the Moro *dato* appealed the question to the marine officer at her left. "You agree that I can beat her to Guam, do you not, Lt. Murphy?"

Without considering the effect, Murphy said, "Sure you can."

That settled it for Virginia. This Malay sportsman must not beat her to Guam.

When she had made herself clear about this, Palawan said: "I'm so certain I can beat you to Guam, Miss Dreece, that I'm willing to make a wager. Anything you like. What is it you Americans say —for money, marbles or chalk?'

Feeling her wine just a little, she answered with spirit. "I don't play marbles, Mr. Palawan."

"Quite so. Shall we say, then, five

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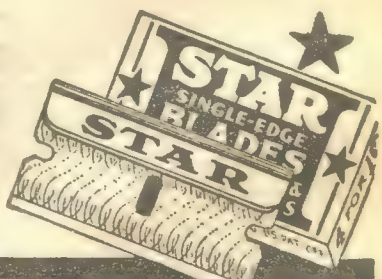

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thousand dollars of gold? Something simple, that either of us can afford to lose, and yet sufficient to make it interesting."

"Five thousand," she answered readily, "will make it interesting. You can give me your check at Guam."

He bowed. "If you win, Miss Dreece."

MURPHY was eyeing the man, puzzled. Hiden back of those dark eyes, he thought, was some submerged motive. Why had he baited the girl into this race? Thinking back, it seemed to Murphy that Palawan must have sensed a clash between himself, Murphy, and the girl. And that his appeal to Murphy had been artfully calculated to clinch the wager.

Just then the major's wife stood up, which was a signal for the others. The company withdrew from the table and moved in two and fours across the tiled patio.

Almost immediately the stringed orchestra struck up a waltz and Virginia found herself amidst marine officers three deep.

Each wanted a dance. But the saturnine Max Raff had other ideas. He came elbowing through to interpose. "Taps for you, Virg. You can't dance all night and fly all day, you know."

She knew he was right. Still, being young, she wanted to dance. So she compromised. "Just one, Maxie darling, then I'll go right to bed."

Reluctantly Raff agreed. "But just one, Virgie."

A dozen officers claimed it. After a show of indecision she picked Haliburton. The girl floated away in his arms among other couples already dancing.

"I sat next to your friend Murphy," she said.

"Friend, did you say?" exclaimed Haliburton. "That bounder? He's no friend of mine."

"He was terribly rude to me."

"I'm not surprised," Haliburton said, thinking back darkly to Murp on him at the mole.

"Not surprised? Why?" really curious about Murphy

"He's a confirmed woman h burton said maliciously. "Been that way ever since his girl jilted him. Sent back his ring and said she was eloping with a stunt flyer from Hollywood. Since then he's had a feud on with all women and all flyers. The more beautiful the woman is, the more he hates her. And if she happens to be a flyer—well, it's just a little more than he can bear."

"You're making that up," she charged, "out of whole cloth."

"Me?" He looked down at her with injured innocence. "Why no. Fact is, I kind of feeling sorry for the poor devil. When that girl jilted Murphy he went absolutely wild. Tried to kill himself with a gun. Look! Don't you see that bullet scar on his forehead?"

Still dancing, Haliburton nodded toward Murphy, who stood dourly apart with his back to a palm. Actually Murphy was meditating about Palawan's challenge for a race to Guam.

There *was* a bullet scar on his forehead, incurred in a waterfront riot recently quelled by marines.

"The poor man!" murmured Virginia.

"Hush!" Haliburton cautioned. "You must never say that. Not to his face, I mean. He simply can't stand pity. It burns him up."

"Honestly?" asked Virginia. Over her partner's shoulder she regarded Murphy with speculation. Nothing would suit her better, she decided, than to burn him up.

Whereupon Virginia maneuvered so that they were near Murphy when the dance ended.

To Murphy's complete amazement, she laid a sympathetic hand on his arm and looked up at him with starry eyes. She said to him softly: "Lt. Haliburton has just told me *everything*. And I'm *so* sorry."

At the same moment Max Raff came up with the major's wife. These two herded the girl off to bed.

Leaving Murphy confronting Haliburton bellicosely. "So you told her everything!" He assumed she had meant his plot to drop her off the wharf into scummy water.

Haliburton, wanting him to think just that, let his chin sag penitently. "She wormed it out of me, Stripes."

Murphy glared, concealing the menace of a clenched fist close to his ribs. "If there *only* weren't any ladies around!" he sighed. "If I *only* weren't an officer and a gentleman!"

CHAPTER II

FORBIDDEN TRAILS

DAWN. A chatter of gulls on ıe beach as the light brightned in Zamboanga. The shinag hydroplane of Virginia Dreece was already towed into place. Not far away floated the *Swallow,* swift-winged chariot of Jolo Palawan.

Once more the beaches were alive with Zamboangans, although dark bushy mountains to the east still hid the sun. Once more the marine band was formed on the mole, this time sending "Anchors Aweigh" in brassy resonance across the bay.

Major Carmichael went out with his guests. His last word to the girl was: "Remember to follow tide water, even if it is a hundred miles further."

"I won't forget," said Virgin

Once more clad in over climbed into the cockpit with M Raff had been busy testing.

"We're all set," he said.

Prahus, canoes, launches were all about them. Nearly all the marine officers were there.

But Virginia was hardly surprised when she failed to see Murphy.

She waved to Haliburton.

"Happy landings," he called back.

"Remember me to Murphy," she laughed.

Haliburton edged his canoe close enough to rest an elbow on the Lady Bird's wing.

"Listen," he said confidently, "that big moose sort of cracked up last night —after the party, I mean. Sat up all night, smoking cigarettes. Left him just now, all hunched over, elbow on his knee and a faraway look in his eye."

"What on earth's the matter with him?" Virginia wondered, resolving at the same time not to be deceived by Haliburton.

"His conscience," said Haliburton sadly. "He's all broken up about the way he treated you. He sent me out here to apologize for him, and I'm wondering if you'd mind bracing him up. Help him a lot if you'd mail him a card from your next stop. Just say 'I forgive you. Virgie.' That would fix everything up just right."

She answered sweetly, "I'm quite sure it would—for you."

"We're wasting daylight," Max Raff snapped impatiently.

Virginia closed the door and started her motors. The roaring overwhelmed protests from Haliburton.

To the right, Jolo Palawan was also tuning his motor. He waved to Virginia, holding up five fingers to remind her of a five thousand dollar wager.

The girl nodded and a moment later went gliding up the lagoon. She raised from the water cleanly, well short of the reef. Wheeling the *Lady Bird* gracefully against the wind, she was off up he northerly shore line of Mindanao.

"A shame we can't cut straight across," she sighed, "and save that hundred miles."

"We'll feel better over the sea," said Raff. "Now listen, Virgie. If you get tired, be frank about it and I'll take over the controls."

Virginia looked back. Palawan had now taken off. His *Swallow* was close behind and gaining.

Quite soon the *Swallow* was alongside. Then the lighter craft forged slightly ahead.

"Doesn't mean he can lick us in the long pull, though," Raff said. "Climbing for altitude after the take-off puts our weight at a disadvantage. It won't be that way on the steady, flat run."

Virginia looked down. The shore palms were like tuft-crowned matches. for half an hour they followed the reef lines. Palawan all the while kept slightly ahead and a bit higher. Virginia drew the stick to her to pick up more altitude herself. The contours of the land below flattened.

The girl sighed happily. "It's all so thrilling, don't you think, Maxie? Last night we had the marines for supper, and tonight we get the Navy at Guam."

Raff kept his eyes moving sternly from one needle to another, glancing occasionally through the windshield to Palawan ahead.

"Look, Virg," he exclaimed. "That fellow's veering inland."

She saw that it was so. Jolo Palawan was now setting a course to head straight across high jungle mountains. On such a route he would bisect the great island of Mindanao instead of cruising around it.

"No wonder he wanted to bet five grand!" growled Raff.

"Do we let him get away with it, Maxie?"

Maxie hesitated. Deep in his heart he too was a gambler. Otherwise he wouldn't be making this mad flight with Virginia Dreece.

"If *he* can take that short cut, so can we," the girl urged.

The motors were purring beautifully. Also the weather was clear, with the sun just now beginning to peep benevolently over Mindanao's backbone. Every flying condition was ideal.

A hundred miles was a hundred miles, thought Raff. It ought to mean an extra hour's rest for Virginia tonight at Guam. The east-and-west length of Mindanao being about two hundred and forty miles, they should traverse it and be over tide water later again in a few hours.

"Be a sport, Maxie."

"If I don't," Raff said grudgingly, "I'll never hear the last of it."

"Spoken like a Viking, Max darling." Virginia veered to the right, directly on the path of Palawan.

Jolo Palawan, in the *Swallow,* looked back and saw them winging along on his own chosen route over swamp, bush and mountain. Palawan smiled, pluming himself for the sheer genius of his inspiration.

They were being lured—and didn't know it.

They were being trapped—and didn't dream it.

The beauty of his plan, reflected Palawan, was that it was baffli
When it was all over, no one
cuse him of foul or unfair d
fact, Virginia Dreece would be
thank, rather than condemn, Jolo Palawan.

As for Raff, Palawan wasn't quite so sure. A bare chance that Raff might see through it. A suspicious chap, that observer! It made a slight hazard, but Palawan, inveterate gambler, shrugged it away. He reflected again that even if Max Raff did suspect everything, did prove everything, and did tell everything to a court of his white peers, even then the affair must still be judged crimeless.

LT. ROSCOE HALIBURTON breezily entered the quarters he shared with Stripes Murphy. He came in for a purpose. Although Miss Dreece had failed to take the bait he had offered, and promise to send an "I forgive you" note calculated to sour Murphy's soul forever, Haliburton still had ideas.

"Hello, Thinker," he greeted as he sailed his cap toward the rack. "Figured it out yet?"

"Figured what out?" mumbled Murphy.

"How would I know? But look." Haliburton pointed to the snipes of three dozen cigarettes near Murphy's bunk. Murphy was still in bed, it now being only an hour after the take-off for Guam.

"You sat up nearly all night cogitating," said Haliburton. "Then you go to bed and don't sleep. First time it ever happened, far I can remember."

"Well, if you must know," Murphy said, "I've been trying to figure out why the sultan wanted her to race with him."

Haliburton stared. "That's easy. Because he's a sport. Didn't you know he bet her one year's pay for a colonel?"

"He bets on bangtails, on game cocks and dice," Murphy admitted. "But this time I've a hunch it goes deeper."

"What goes deeper?"

"His reason for racing her to Guam."

"Say, Stripes, are you [illegible] thought you didn't give a [illegible] for that girl. You made out [illegible] gnat in your eye."

"She is," Murphy insisted. [illegible] don't like mysteries, especially when the heavy's a tall, dark Malay pirate like Jolo Palawan. I thought I smelled something phoney about that race—sat right across table from him, you remember, when he framed it. He had a tense, spidery look, like it meant something big."

"Well, five thousand dollars is—"

"Jolo's rolling in dough, and doesn't care whether he wins this pot or not. I've simply been trying to dope out what he really wants."

"Well, did you?" Haliburton sat down and propped his feet on the bunk post.

Murphy tamped out his last cigarette. "Believe I did. Maybe I'm wrong, but I've a hunch it's this way. The sultan's vain. Check?"

"You mean stuck on himself? That's right, clear up to the eye-brows."

"He was born rich," Murphy said, "the son of a Sulu sultan and just about the biggest frog in the Malay puddle. He was smart. Licked all the education out this way and then went to Yale. Where he didn't cut any ice. The sophs paddled him when he stepped on the grass, slapped him around like any other hillbilly freshman. So Jolo checked out. He went to England and tried Oxford. Stuck it out there—but he still didn't cut any ice. He was just another well-dressed Swami. No one pointed him out as the great Jolo Palawan."

"So what?"

"So now he wants to fix all that," suggested Murphy, "by getting his name on every front page in the world tomorrow morning."

"Wants attention, is that it?"

"Attention from the white man's world. It's the only thing his money never could buy him. After this, when he walks across the lobby of a London hotel or sits on the beach at Miami, they'll say: 'Look, that's Jolo Palawan, don't you remember? He raced the Dreece girl on her Pacific hop.'"

Haliburton stoked his pipe and blew rings. "Well, what of it? He wants attention. So does everyone. Doesn't make him a crook, does it?"

"Who called him a crook?"

"Then if he's on the level, why worry?"

"Who's worrying?"

"You are." Haliburton grinned and then proceeded to mimic Murphy as of yesterday: "Well, if you fell for her, you fell for her! Guess it's just one those things!"

Murphy raised up in bed to throw a boot at him. Haliburton, dodging, went on sadly: "Trouble with you, Murphy, is that you don't follow these things up. You should have been out there this morning to see her off, like the rest of us were."

"I saw her come in. That was enough," Murphy growled.

"Ah but you missed something by not being out there, my boy. She asked about you. I think she wanted to kiss and make up."

"Yeah?" Murphy was skeptical.

"Anyway," asserted Haliburton, "she

gave me a note for you." He produced from his inner pocket a dainty pink note. Its sealed envelope was addressed: "Lt. Murphy, U. S. Marines," apparently in a girlish hand.

Murphy eyed it derisively.

"Listen, clown. She didn't send me any note. Dear little Virgie doesn't like me, and it's mutual. We fought like wildcats from the drop of the hat."

"That's just it," Haliburton admitted. He extended the note toward Murphy, but Murphy refused to touch it. "She admits all that, like the grand little sport she is, and she says most of it was her fault. She said she was a bit snippy, that you'd hazed her a little for being precocious, and she slashed back at you. And now she didn't want to leave without putting it straight. Do you want it, or don't you?"

"I don't."

"Suits me. I'll throw it away, then." Haliburton tossed the message into a waste basket, got up and sauntered out whistling.

Murphy glared at the waste basket.

"Must think I'm some dumb artilleryman!" he muttered.

He continued to regard the waste basket until a furrow of uncertainty creased his forehead. Just a bare chance the note wasn't a phoney after all!

A striker came in to sweep out the room. The enlisted man dumped his sweepings in the waste basket, picked up the basket and started out.

"Hold on!" Murphy motioned him back with a frown. "Never mind taking that out just yet."

The striker, puzzled, nevertheless put the receptacle down and withdrew.

Then Murphy got out of bed. He crossed guiltily to the door and locked it. He pulled down the shades before fishing out the note.

About to slit it open, he desisted with sly precaution. Instead he lighted a candle. By holding a tin cup of water over the flame he made steam. With this he carefully steamed open the letter.

The enclosure was on a pink sheet. Although the message seemed to be in the same girlish hand it was patently a forgery by Haliburton.

> Dear Lt. Murphy:
> When Lt. Haliburton told me you tried to make him drop me in the bay, I cried. It was so cute of you, you big brute.
>
> Virgie.

Murphy made a face at it. Then he carefully resealed the note and dropped it back into the waste basket. He raised the window shades and unlocked the door.

Haliburton returned to find him shaving nonchalantly. Peering covertly into the waste basket, Haliburton's jaw fell when he saw that the note was undisturbed. Murphy's grin mocked him in the mirror.

VIRGINIA DREECE and Max Raff flew on easterly along the high, rugged axis of Mindanao. Below were impenetrable thickets, morasses of *cogan*, crocodile rivers.

Ahead loomed a battery of volcanic peaks rising more than ten thousand feet above sea level.

Less than a mile ahead flew Jolo Palawan.

"Tired, Virg?" Raff asked. Frequently he offered to spell her at the controls.

"Not a bit," she said. "And I won't be. In twelve more hours we'll be at Guam. Then only three more hops left, Maxie. We can cable mother from Guam and say we'll be home Sunday."

"We're not there yet," Raff growled. He studied the chart. After calculations by dead reckoning he concluded his position now to be over the darkest, highest heart of Mindanao.

"Map shows a big lake in here somewhere. Seems to scale about ten miles across."

"I think I see it," Virginia echoed, "on that woody bench ahead."

Raff peered through the windshield.

The plane came to a jolting halt.

"Looks like it," he agreed. "That volcano on the edge of it must be Apo—chart says it's 10,300 feet above the sea. Ought to make the lake about seven or eight thousand."

They were over the lake now. Virginia looked down and saw walls of forest hemming it in. If any villages were near it, she failed to see them from this altitude.

Raff said: "We could fly in any of four directions and reach tide water in an hour, Virg. Only a hundred miles, I should say. But if we were afoot, it might as well be a thousand."

"Gracious!" exclaimed Virginia with a shudder. "I'll bet we'd have to chop our way through that brush with bolos. And we haven't any bolos. But we could borrow some from the head-hunters, I suppose!"

Raff failed to hear this because he was staring intently through the windshield at Palawan's *Swallow*. Although the smaller plane was only a speck in the distance ahead, it seemed evident that Palawan was having trouble.

He was diving at a steep angl
as though out of control.

"Gee, Virg! Looks like h
crack up!"

Palawan's craft was now just over the far side of the lake. As Virginia stared at it, the angle of descent steepened.

"Looks like his motor quit him," Raff

worried. "Circle, Virg, till we can see what's wrong with him."

The *Swallow* was two thousand or more feet below them now, still spinning hazardously toward the edge of the lake. As far as those above could tell, no exhaust came from it. Almost surely Palawan's power had gone dead. Virginia banked to the right, circling to reconnoitre. "If he bails out, Maxie, we'll have to pick him up."

Looking directly down was awkward, and Raff could not be sure whether or not Palawan had bailed out. His guess was that the Moro was still aboard, desperately trying to flatten out and glide to a safe landing on the lake.

Then a wall of jungle on the shore obscured Palawan's plane. Although Virginia herself was now spiraling lower, Max Raff was still too high to be sure just what had happened. Palawan, he reasoned, wouldn't be stunting in a spot like this. Certainly not when he was racing, on a wager, to Guam.

Had he cracked up? Had the shock of the impact killed him? Conceivably he was only stunned, yet trapped in a wreck which might now burst into flames.

Raff's eyes met Virgie's. Sportsmanship left them no choice. If one is racing a rival and he cracks up, one must of course land to make sure of his fate. Especially in a wilderness like this.

"We've got to have a look, Virg," Raff said.

With a nod, she continued to spiral downward. It should be simple enough, she thought, to land on this wide smooth lake. And equally simple to take off again for Guam.

JOLO PALAWAN sat upright in the tiny cubicle of his cockpit. He loosened the strap across his knees and lighted a cigarette. His motor was silent—but he had shut off the power himself.

The steepness of that descent had been of his own volition. Expertly he had flattened at the last moment to make a safe contact with the water. The *Swallow* was in no wise injured.

Taxiing in under the banyans at a creek mouth, he had been careful to keep directly over a submerged extension of the creek channel. For although the lake was wide and generally deep, along this shore the water was quite shallow. In fact, Jolo Palawan knew that had this been the dry season, a broad area now covered by water would be mud flats; and the mud flats would show a generous sprinkling of driftwood from the mountains.

Snaggy logs lay out there, and stumps, many of them submerged less than five feet. Easy enough for the light *Swallow* to land there, as it had done often before with Palawan cautiously following the channel. But the heavier, twin-motored *Lady Bird* was almost sure to hit trouble.

Was it coming down? Palawan couldn't see because he was under the banyans. His eyes instead sought a broad path which led upslope from the shore, disappearing under an arch of the bush. He knew quite well where the path went, because for Jolo Palawan this had been no haphazard landing.

With exactitude and foreplanning he had landed here—and now what worried him most was that inmates of a well-staffed house up the path might too quickly come rushing to greet him. Or that Observer Raff might look down and see the house nesting there in the bush, and so fly on, assuming that Palawan would not lack succor.

But no, he could hear the droning descent of the *Lady Bird's* motors. The big plane was dropping toward a landing on the lake. At the same moment Palawan heard cries from up the path. Immediately, in his heretofore immaculate whites, he got out of the cockpit and stepped down into waist-deep water. From there he waded ashore.

"Jolo!" A young Malay woman of rank and beauty came running down the path. Palawan took her in his arms with husbandly affection. Then a half dozen

women servants appeared in her wake. Back of these came a pair of chubby brown house boys. Bringing up the rear came a grinning old man, toothless, hobbling on a cane—the chieftain of a mountain tribe but not too proud to serve as major domo in the house of one greater than himself, Jolo Palawan.

"We see you descend, loved one!" exclaimed the young woman. "We think you have distress. Is it so, Jolo?" Her dark eyes looked anxiously into Palawan's.

She spoke in Malay, and Palawan, answering in the same tongue, preferred to make no explanation. Nor was there any reason to take her into his confidence.

"I am all right, Inda," he said. "And I have brought you a present." His hand touched a gift in his inner pocket, but at the moment he did not expose it.

"You bring guests, Jolo?" she asked, diverting her gaze now to the descending *Lady Bird*.

The roar of the bigger plane was deafening by this time, and the entire group turned to stare out upon the lake. They saw the pontoons of the Dreece craft touch water, ever so lightly, then rise, then drop to skim smoothly along the surface toward shore. The drone of the motors stopped. Virginia had made a perfect landing and was coasting toward them.

For the first fifty yards of her approach there was no trouble. Speed had considerably slackened when the *Lady Bird's* pontoons began scraping snags. They heard ripping sounds. The plane came to a jolting halt. Palawan heard a cry from Virginia and a crash of windshield glass as Max Raff was hurled forward.

The pontoons had struck bottom.

Palawan smiled faintly. This was all quite as he wished. No serious injury to man or girl, and yet the plane itself would need at least minor repairs. Certainly there could be no immediate takeoff for Guam.

Palawan clapped his hands briskly.

"A canoe, at once," he demanded of the boys.

One of the Malay boys produced a canoe from rushes by the shore. Jolo stepped in it, beckoned for the boy to man the paddle. To Inda he said: "I shall inquire if they need assistance. And find out why they have come down."

The boy paddled him quickly to the Dreece plane.

Max Raff, holding a handkerchief to minor cuts on his forehead, opened the cockpit door. He was exasperated. Alert suspicion, too, was in the eye[illegible] Palawan's.

Palawan, he could see, w[illegible] injured. So was Palawan's [illegible] thing crooked about all thi[illegible] thinking. A question trembled on his lip.

Unspoken, Palawan could nevertheless read it there: "Did you fake that crack-up, Palawan, just to bring us down?"

Anxiety alone appeared to rule Palawan.

"But you should not have come down, my friends!" he exclaimed. "This is no safe landing for a big plane such as yours."

"We just found that out," said Raff dryly.

"Is the lady hurt?"

Virginia herself answered. "Not a bit. But what beastly luck! We're in no shape for a take-off, are we, Maxie?"

With a scowl, Raff motioned to the water outside. A purplish rainbow film covered it now—gasoline from a snag-ripped tank.

"One of the pontoons ripped all to hell too," growled Raff. "Wiring shot—it'll need some tinkering before I can send off a message. Outside of that we seem to be all right."

"But you?" Virginia questioned curiously of Palawan. "We saw you go down suddenly, and we thought—"

"It is all very simple," the Malay broke in. "But I did not know you fol-

lowed me. I did not look back. I thought you were keeping to the coast line around Mindanao."

To Virginia the last assertion seemed plausible, since the major of marines had warned her to do just that.

But Raff found it much less convincing. This was all too pat, he thought. The wager last night, and now the man's sudden descent here in his own bailiwick of the wilderness.

"You say it's all very simple," Raff challenged. "Just how simple, if it's no secret?"

I HAVE a mountain home ere," Palawan explained. The high air is cool and pleasnt, and at certain seasons my [illegible] it to the palace of my forefathers in Sulu. There she is now, at the foot of the path." He pointed. The Americans looked and saw Inda surrounded by servitors.

To Raff it seemed more than ever like this Malay was pulling things out of a hat. His suspicions were about to break leash, but he checked them to keep from alarming Virginia.

Instead he said evenly to Palawan: "You led us to believe, didn't you, that you were on your way to Honolulu via Guam and Wake?"

"Exactly," confirmed Palawan. His thin lips drooped then with a sheepish smile. "And my wife, Inda, would like to go with me. I do not take her, though. Why?" He shrugged. "Well, let us say that it is because she does not like to wear shoes. Guests in the Waikiki hotels, in the evening at least, are expected to wear shoes. Never can I make Inda understand this, so I leave her at home."

"What," demanded Raff, "has your leaving her at home got to do with your tailspin in the bush?"

"Ah!" And again Palawan smiled sheepishly. "You are not a married man, Mr. Raff? If you were, you would know what a husband must always do when he goes away to play in Honolulu."

Raff stared. But Virginia gave a nervous laugh.

"Don't be stupid, Maxie," she interposed. "He buys her a new dress, or a string of beads, or something, so she won't be too angry."

Palawan bowed. "You have such nice understanding, Miss Dreece." From an inner pocket he produced a small plush box bearing the trademark of a Singapore jeweler. From this he took a necklace of red rhinestones, holding them to catch sunlight before Raff's still unconvinced eyes.

Virginia looked at the necklace and smiled. Husbands, she thought, were all alike under the skin.

"And your tailspin?" Raff inquired coldly. "You came down that way purposely, did you not?"

Jolo affected a slight embarrassment. "You force me to a confession, Mr. Raff. Yes, I did it to convince Inda. She has been insisting of late that I buy a two-seater plane, so that I can take her along when I go to Hong Kong, Manila and Honolulu. I tell her it is too dangerous. This excuse she does not accept. So today I let her see me come down in apparent distress, so that she will stop asking to fly with me."

"*We* thought your neck was broken," Raff said gruffly. "So of course we had to come down."

"And such a pity!" exclaimed Palawan. "Never can I forgive myself." He stood washing one hand through the other, in apparent contrition. "But since it comes about through my blunder, I insist on paying all expense of repairs."

"The expense," said Virginia, "doesn't matter."

"Yet I insist on bearing it," the Malay persisted. "You came down to help me, so it is the very least I can do."

"But damn it," Raff erupted, "how do we get out of here?"

"My house is yours," said Jolo Palawan. "You shall be the guests of my wife, while I fly on to Guam and arrange for repairs."

Raff looked across sourly toward the *Swallow*. "What about us going with you?"

Palawan made a grimace of regret.

"My little plane is made to carry only one," he protested, his face blank. "With inconvenience two might squeeze in, but three?"

The observer considered all angles. He himself could go with Palawan to Guam. But he rebelled at the idea of leaving Virginia here alone among savages. Another alternate would be for him to stay here and send Virginia with Palawan to Guam—but definitely he had no intention of trusting the Malay that far.

"All right," Raff agreed with reluctance. "We'll accept the shelter of your roof for one night. In the meantime you fly on to Guam. Let's trust you can help us without delay."

Guam being a United States naval base as well as a stopping point on the route of the China Clipper, aid could more readily be marshaled there than at Zamboanga, where were only a few wingless marines.

"And better start at once," Raff added, "so the whole civilized world won't think Virg cracked up at sea."

"I shall be off," promised Jolo, "as soon as I have conducted you to my house."

He extended a hand to Virginia, helping her into the canoe. Raff followed morosely and the boy bega[n] them toward the shore.

BY NOW many were assembled there. To the group [o]f Inda and her servants were [a]dded numerous wild moun[ta]in Malays from the bush villages. These presumably had been on the run this way for the past half hour, attracted by the spectacular descent of Palawan's plane.

Stepping from the canoe to the shore amidst these wild men, Raff became more dubious than ever. These tribesmen wore only a loin cloth and were armed with spears, barongs, krises. They stood staring stolidly, thick lips parted to expose blackened teeth. Virginia, seeing them, lost color and held tightly to Raff's arm.

The pretty Malay woman in red silk, wearing diamond earrings and yet barefooted, inclined her head in a welcome.

Jolo presented her formally. "Miss Dreece, Mr. Raff, this is my wife, Inda."

Had he desired to be technical as well as accurate, Palawan should have said, "This is my favorite wife, Inda." For there were others at the Sulu estate, on the island of Jolo. Palawan, a Mohammedan, was frankly a polygamist, as had been all his ancestors.

Trouble was that Inda, his favorite, disliked sharing a harem with the others. That was why she chose to entrench herself among the clouds of Mindanao, at her husband's mountain lodge. For by her very residence here she could pull him away from the others.

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Inda was jealous of all yo
en. Already her dark eye
with speculation upon Virg
A mere child in dungarees.
plump, as a woman should be.
was fair and a man might think her beautiful. Was this all an accident? Like Max Raff, Inda did not fully trust Jolo Palawan.

Raff and Virginia had no time to consider her now. For Palawan quickly conducted them up a shady path which, bending out of sight in the bush, presumably led toward a dwelling. And the path was grotesquely lined on either side with Malay tribesmen.

"They make me feel jumpy," Virginia whispered to Raff. She tried not to look at the spears and bolos which hemmed her in.

"They're just curious, ignorant mountain folk," Raff assured her. "They're lined up just like we'd be to see a parade."

She hoped they were. Yet certain phrases spoken by Major Carmichael echoed in her memory. "More nearly kin to the Dyaks of Borneo than to the mill run of Filipinos." And—"Compared to the wild Malays of the Mindanao mountains, the head-hunting Bontoks and Igorrotes of Luzon are mere sissies."

The girl shivered and held closer to Raff.

Then she was in a degree relieved to observe an humble obeisance made by each savage before Palawan. As Palawan passed, each of the natives in turn dropped to knees and touched forehead to the ground. So he remained until Palawan was well by.

Of these salutes Palawan made no acknowledgment. Clearly he was used to them—tributes paid to the mightiest of all Moros by the least. And yet it was precisely because of this veneration that Jolo had chosen to establish a part time residence here. When his vanity became bruised by the outside world, here he could always return to be exalted. When white soldiers called him "Sultan" with tongues in their cheeks, here he could always dart back, on swift magic wings, to a kingship of realities.

Virginia's degree of relief came because she sensed that anyone under the patronage of Palawan would not be molested by these savages.

She continued up the path between Raff and Jolo. Inda walked behind, as became a Mohammedan wife, albeit with waxing ill humor. A pout grew on her lips as she regarded Virginia.

Around the bend—and they came to a bower of tree ferns and well trimmed croton shrubbery. A sweep of green lawn lay beneath, while beyond, shaded from the sun by clusters of bamboo and tall palms, peeped the gables of a bungalow.

Virginia's relief increased when she reached this house and found it to be comfortably European. A screened *lanai* enclosed it on three sides; the girl glimpsed gay cushions and wicker furnishings which would have done credit to an Occidental golf club.

"Here we are, and may you rest in contentment!" smiled Palawan. "Inda, please show them to quarters. I myself must go quickly."

He kissed away the pout on Inda's lips, then draped about her neck the necklace of rhinestones.

With a click of his heels Jolo Palawan turned and went back alone down the path.

HE WAS elated. Here they
were — those foolish Ameri-
cans! Nor could they, Jolo reasoned with logic, hold him in any way responsible. He had not told them to come. He had laid no hand on them. No hand would be laid on them. His doors were wide open, and they could go at will.

But where? Through a hundred miles of thorn jungle? Through hopeless impasses of bamboo thicket? Across swamps swarming with reptiles?

No. The doors were open but they would not go.

Not, that is, until he had collected his

ransom. Not gold. Jolo Palawan already had more gold than he needed. Yet a thing he lacked was without price, a value which all the wealth of the Indies could not buy him.

First, he would take off now for Guam. But purposely he would delay in some lagoon for two days and nights, deliberately retarding his arrival at Guam. He could presume that his magneto needed tinkering. For two days and nights he would so tinker.

In the meantime, let them worry. Let the telegraphs click. Let silly gunboats scout through the seas. Let them cry the extras in New York, in London, in Melbourne: "Dreece Plane Overdue at Guam!" "Richest Girl Lost at Sea!"

Let them gasp over that much—for two days and nights. Let hope die. Let the tragedy burn deep. And then, out of a clear blue sky, let Jolo Palawan arrive safely at Guam.

"Miss Dreece? Yes, gentlemen, she's quite all right. A guest at my house on Mindanao."

As simple as that. No crime. No motive of guilt provable in any court.

He'd make good on it, follow through, charter a plane or two, in the end set the girl down snugly in the Navy's lap at Guam. And laugh in his sleeve. Laugh because even after the lost ones had told their own story, the world of stupid Christians still wouldn't guess what had really happened. Least of all would they know of a ransom paid to Jolo Palawan.

A name! That was his price.

A name to conjure with forever and aye. Jolo Palawan, viking of the air and sea to whom the world owed the salvage of its most adventurous heroine.

It was as good as done now, thought Palawan as he continued down the path. The bold stroke of a Malay pirate tempered with the smooth finesse of an Oxford intellectual.

He came to the foot of the path and called to a group of the wild natives. Tersely he directed them to wade out, to turn his *Swallow* around so that it pointed to mid-lake. Then they could return and carry him on their shoulders to the cockpit.

While they obeyed him, Palawan stood on the shore and lighted a cigarette. Again his lips curved in a smile of sly elation.

Too late he heard Raff's footstep. Raff stood dourly before him. And Raff did not miss that derisive smile.

In all his calculations Palawan had reckoned without Raff.

"Listen, Palawan," Raff began brusquely, "I haven't said what I really think, because I didn't want to scare Virgie. But man to man I'm telling *you*. The whole thing's cock-eyed. It smells. You *did* know we were flying back of you. And as for the tailspin skit, and the reason you claim for it, I wouldn't believe it on a stack of Bibles.

Blood rushed to Palawan's
For an instant the guilt in his
out starkly to Raff. Then t
pulled himself together, answering stiffly: "As your host, I must overlook insults."

"I haven't started telling you—yet," Raff blazed at him. "The girl's mother told me to look after her, and I'm here to do just that. I mean I'm going to Guam with you, Jolo Palawan, even if I have to ride your neck all the way."

Palawan saw his entire scheme crumbling.

"When it first came up," Raff said, "I thought I'd better not leave the girl here alone. But now I've seen her room. There's a modern lock on the door. Besides, I trust your wife as a chaperone, even if I don't trust you. So the safest choice is to ride your neck to Guam, holding you as a hostage until I can beat it back here with the Navy."

Raff was in no mood for half measures. To enforce his point he produced a Colt revolver and put its muzzle against Palawan.

"Just like this," he announced, "we're riding to Guam. Let's get started. This

bullet's got your name on it if we don't make Guam, or if Virgie isn't safe in her room when we get back with the Navy."

Palawan had no choice. His head bowed in surrender. His lips parted to accept the ultimatum.

Before he could speak, however, almost inevitable doom struck Max Raff.

Raff, without weighing it in the pitch of his resentment, stood much in the position of an assassin invading a monarch's court. Or like an anarchist stepping with bomb in hand from the curb as a dictator passes in his carriage.

His words were not understood by Malay ears, but Malay eyes saw the menace of his gun. A spear came shooting from the bush. It pierced Raff and dropped him lifeless at the feet of Palawan.

FEAR came like a spear into Palawan's heart. It shocked him into helpless stupefaction, as he stood staring down at the victim. He would not have wished this dreadful fate upon Raff. This was crime. Here was something he couldn't pass off, with smiles and suave gestures, at Guam.

A crime not of his own planning, yet his to explain. Its blood was on his head. Everything was upset—now. The bold stroke of a Malay pirate was still there, but the Oxford finesse was gone.

For a minute Jolo's wits deserted him.

He stood with head bowed, thinking desperately. Then he called a chief of the tribesman.

"Determine who threw the spear, Tawi, and hold the man until I return. Now it is more necessary than ever that I go at once."

He let four stalwarts pick him up. As they carried him to the plane he directed: "Place the victim out of sight, under shelter. And better say nothing until I return, so that the white girl will not be frightened."

He crawled into the cockpit and strapped himself in place. The motor hummed at his touch. As it warmed, he knew that he must now give up his scheme of purposeful delay. Nothing to do but make all haste to Guam and report murder. He could still whitewash his own motives. They need never know the suspicions voiced in the last breath of Max Raff.

After all they had been only suspicions. The smartest lawyers in the world could never prove them. Except for hidden aspirations in his own mind, Jolo Palawan was in fact innocent, and even the aspirations were tainted with nothing worse than a colossal vanity.

Definitely, decided Palawan as he taxied toward mid-lake for the take-off, he must hasten to Guam and tell all.

He skimmed the water, took rise, labored for altitude, banked against the sun and set a course easterly toward Guam. Then, looking at his watch, he was amazed to see that the entire delay at the lake had consumed only an hour.

Reaching Guam, he would after all be only a trifle overdue. His mind pictured the reception there. Naval officers, informed accurately by wireless of the start from Zamboanga, would be lined up to observe the finish of a race. Virginia Dreece versus Jolo Palawan. "The Sultan", they'd be calling him with a condescending tolerance which had always been offensive to Palawan.

When the sultan arrived alone, he would seem to have won the race. Could he make anything out of that, pondered Palawan?

An hour droned by. The *Swallow* flew swiftly and Palawan was again over the sea. Imps of doubt squirmed within his brain. Just what should he say to the Navy at Guam?

Hour after hour he flew on, considering fearfully. What should he tell them? The truth? Would they believe? Or would they be like Raff?

His mind flinched back and forth between decisions. Would they suspect he'd connived to lure a white girl to his mountain home? Americans, Palawan

"This bullet's got your name on it if we don't make Guam."

knew, were touchy about those things. Always inclined to doubt a Malay's word. Superior pigs! He remembered those sophomores at Yale. And a particularly tough marine who had been across table from him last night at Zamboanga. That marine had looked daggers of doubt at and through him, at his mere suggestion of a race. Still, what could they prove? After all, the girl would be restored unharmed.

But what about Raff's murder? Would they say he'd killed Raff to insure the girl's detention? She hadn't seen Raff's fate. She couldn't testify that Palawan hadn't ordered Raff cut down. Just like those Yankees to believe anything!

Jolo Palawan was still fretting indecisively when he sighted Guam at sunset. He noted the time. It was only a trifle later than he would have arrived had there been no disaster. His pontoons touched the surface of the bay and he coasted to a stop. Navy men were on the pier. Here came some of them in a launch.

The launch drew alongside. Palawan, his harassed mind still groping between alternatives, opened his door to face the officers. They looked very stern, he thought. As stern as Raff himself and as tough as some of those marines at Zamboanga.

A beetle-browed commander barked at him: "Well, Palawan, how far back did you leave Miss Dreece?"

So that they could not look at his eyes, Palawan cupped his hands to light a cigarette. The inquiry was snapped at him again and only then did Palawan make a decision.

"Oh, hasn't she arrived yet?" he asked.

His smile was forced, his face like glistening wax.

CHAPTER III

"INSPECT NEW RECRUIT—MISS NOTHING."

STRIPES Murphy, at Zamboanga, elbowed his way into the wireless room of the *Huron*—the *Huron* being a small and all but obsolete gunboat on duty there for the convenience of Major Carmichael's marines.

Other officers were in the wireless room and grouped on deck outside. Their faces were serious.

"Guam's sighted a plane," someone told Murphy. "Don't know yet whether it's Virg or the sultan."

"Shush!" cautioned Roscoe Haliburton. "He's just contacted the *Ontario* again." The *Ontario* was another of the Navy's ugly ducklings, a coal-burner of model 1912 like the *Huron,* and was stationed at Guam.

Stripes glanced at his wrist watch. Thirteen hours since the take-off, he calculated. Both planes should be there by now.

The buzzing of dots and dashes continued for another minute. Then the operator turned to report: "No sign of Miss Dreece yet. But the sultan's in. He just hit the bay."

"Which wins him five grand!" sighed Haliburton. "Imagine it. Takes a leatherneck half a lifetime to earn that much."

The next report came ten minutes later. "Dreece plane not in yet. Sultan says he lost track of them an hour after the take-off."

Murphy began to worry. He looked out. It was nearly dark now, and it would be slightly darker at Guam.

More clicks from the wireless. "Sultan was surprised to find he'd won the race. He thought she was ahead of him."

Time passed and Murphy began pacing the deck, looking at his watch as he scowled into darkness. That kid should have blown into Guam by now. Still, he reflected, she'd made longer hops than this one since starting her equitorial circuit. Plenty of nightfalls must have found her a-wing.

"Palawan followed tide water all the way?" he asked presently.

The wireless man nodded. "And he's sure the other plane did too. When he saw them last, they were further off shore than he was."

Minutes ticked relentlessly by, all failing to bring good news from Guam. Murphy lighted his pipe and stood biting hard on the stem.

Lt. Stacey, U.S.N., appeared on deck. The only naval officer at Zamboanga, Stacey was in command of the *Huron* and temporarily attached to duty with the marines.

"Better report the situation to the major," he snapped to a C.P.O. "And tell Jones to get up steam."

Shortly the major of marines appeared on the *Huron.* Virginia Dreece and her observer were now at least three hours overdue at Guam. The major conferred with Stacey. Then word was sent ashore to a small commercial broadcasting station located at Zamboanga, requesting the Filipino manager to broadcast an announcement.

"Chances are," Carmichael said, "that she had engine trouble and turned back this way. Possibly made a landing in some lagoon up the Mindanao coast. If so, this broadcast ought to locate her."

The pontoons should keep her afloat in quiet water, Stacey pointed out. On the other hand she might be down in an open, rough sea. Steam was up now and the entire detachment was standing by for orders.

Came another report from Guam.

"Jolo Palawan," it said, "has already refuelled and started back over his own route. Navy plane will follow."

"Fat lot of good it'll do 'em at night," an officer argued.

"No," Carmichael contested, "I im-

agine the Dreece plane has rockets and flares. If she keeps afloat and the lights of a scout plane pass overhead, Raff can send up a rocket."

"Pearl Harbor on the air, sir," the operator reported presently.

They'd all been waiting for just that—word from Pearl Harbor at Honolulu. Both Guam and Zamboanga, in fact the entire western Pacific area, took orders from Pearl Harbor.

These orders came crisply now. The *Huron* was to cruise toward Guam, while simultaneously the *Ontario* was to cruise toward Zamboanga. The gunboats were to meet halfway, then each would return to its own base. "Determine fate of Dreece plane and render all possible aid."

A bustle aboard the *Huron* as she prepared to weigh anchor. Although Stacey naturally remained in command of navigation, Carmichael sent along half a dozen marine officers to assist the scouting. Among these was Murphy.

Haliburton, because he happened to be commander of the guard for this twenty-four hour period, was left behind.

Midnight and the gunboat slipped out through the reef, turned her rough riding prow northeast and went crusing up the Mindanao shore.

At the same hour Jolo Palawan, in his *Swallow,* was winging westerly from Guam.

AND Virginia Dreece, behind a locked door in her room at the mountain house, lay sleepless and yet unalarmed. Sleepless because some faint intangible threat seemed to seep in front the silent bush. Unalarmed because she knew nothing about the tragedy to Raff.

Raff, she supposed, had flown to Guam with Palawan.

His final decision had been to do so as he had left her to overtake at the lake shore. The stout lo door, the snug domestic atmo this house, together with the obvious guilelessness of Inda, had decided him. From her room Virginia had heard the *Swallow* roar away. She had even glimpsed it, through the tree tops, heading toward Guam. Raff had not returned. So of course she thought he had gone with Palawan.

Inda had made her quite comfortable and one of the house boys had brought her bag from the *Lady Bird.* A Malay maidservant had been offered, but since the woman did not speak English Virginia had dismissed her. Later she discovered that the maid lay sleeping on a mat just outside her door.

Nothing to worry about except a trifling expense and a delay in the schedule. However, she wasn't out for any record. Tomorrow, Virginia kept assuring herself, Maxie would be back with help from Guam. He could bring along a couple of good mechanics and some gasoline. With the pontoons and tank repaired, they could fly on.

Still the girl lay sleepless. The bush was so oppressively silent. Not even an owl or a cricket. A vast emptiness hemmed her in, breathless and yet alive with moist odors from the jungle.

It was nearly dawn before Virignia fell asleep.

She awoke with sunlight shining on the screen. But still the same silence. No padding feet, although she knew the house was overrun with servants.

She threw back the mosquito netting and arose from her couch. Quickly she dressed. Then came Inda's voice through the door:

"You eat in room here, lady? Or with myself on *lanai?*"

"Oh, with you, if you don't mind," Virginia called back.

In a little while she went out and the silent maidservant ushered her to a dining *lanai.* A table for three was set there, and two were already seated.

Inda greeted her without expression. "Good morning. We hope you have rest well."

Sight of the other breakfaster startled Virginia. He stood up, bowed formally and held a chair for her. Jolo Palawan!

"But how," she questioned, "did you get back so soon? You went to Guam with Maxie, didn't you?"

"Mr. Raff," he explained, "flew to Guam in my plane. I myself did not go."

"You didn't go? But you said—"

Palawan smiled. "It is very simple. There was only room for one and yet Mr. Raff insisted on going. As my guest, his wish was my command. So here I am while he makes the errand to Guam. Mr. Raff is a competent pilot, yes?"

"Oh!" Then, doubtfully, "Of course!"

He was still holding the chair for her. Virginia sat down and tried to assure herself that everything was all right. Yes, Maxie was a seasoned pilot. And where could she find a more considerate host than Jolo Palawan?

Yet some vague intuition worried the girl. Something was being withheld, she thought. Was Maxie in trouble? Of course not. Maxie must have reached Guam by nightfall; soon he would be taking off to rejoin her with whatever was needed.

In Palawan's smooth brown face she could read no treachery. The Malay seemed quite at ease as he sipped black coffee and toyed with the halves of a wild orange. It was like him, she thought, to let Raff choose. Maxie, no doubt, had been gruff to the point of rudeness. She remembered his mood upon leaving her. And Palawan was a supersensitive Oriental. It would be like him to bow and say: "Since my honored guest does not trust me, he may take my plane and go himself."

All the while Virginia could feel Inda's eyes on her with a curious scrutiny. Neither warmth nor hostility was there. Only a question. Why did this beautiful white girl come to her husband's house? Was it only for a day, as her husband claimed?

Virginia laughed nervously. They were all on edge, she thought, except Jolo Palawan. No doubt her own suspicions, and Raff's, were as stupid as Inda's.

Palawan looked out through the screen at a cloudy sky. Then he arose and said politely: "Please excuse me—but I think a monsoon is brewing. I must put the *Lady Bird* in a safer anchorage, Miss Dreeee."

"Isn't it safe where it is?"

"No, it is too open there. A high wind would make big waves and give it a bad beating. I spoke to Mr. Raff about it."

"And what did he say?"

"We agreed it would be wise to have it towed to a sheltered pool, near here. A more convenient place to make repairs, also."

Virginia could only consent. Her host bowed again and withdrew.

Later she went out and walked down to the foot of the path. The entire lake shore was peaceful. Birds were chattering in fruit-laden trees. No natives were in evidence except a few shy servants from the house, and a few others in *prâhus* at work with pry poles by the grounded plane.

Palawan was out there, giving directions. Soon the *Lady Bird* was pushed back free from the mud bar. The *prahus* began towing it upshore, and Virginia, to observe where they took it, tried to follow along the bank. But there was no path. A mongoo[illegible] pering from the water's ed[illegible] bamboos, frightened her. [illegible] came to mangroves growing i[illegible] far into the lake. They cut off her prog ress. A slim, greenish reptile slipped from a bough, falling with a splash almost at her feet.

The girl turned and made a hasty retreat to the house.

THE small fleet of prahus veered into an inlet, towing the *Lady Bird* into a densely sheltered bayou.

Palawan then summoned and gave precise orders.

"Tawi, send for six of y young men."

Tawi kneeled in his nakedness and made obeisance. Arising, he dispatched a runner to bring six swift young men.

"Speak to those in the *prahus,*" said Palawan, "and tell them to chop with their barongs. Let them hack away anything that will float."

Structurally the *Lady Bird* was of duraluminum. Certain accessories, however, were lighter than water, such as a plywood partition between cockpit and fuselage, kapok seat cushions, and oars provided for a collapsible boat.

Fragments of these buoyant parts were laid at Palawan's feet. He told Tawi to make them into six fagots of equal weight. By the time this was done, six swift young men had arrived from the villages.

Tawi was placed in command of them. Their mission, Palawan said, must forever be kept secret. Even their wives and children must never know; any whisper would draw the penalty of death.

Each swift young man must lash a fagot on his back. Led then by Tawi, they must hasten northward and down mountain to the sea. They must slip unseen through the bush and avoid all villages.

Near the sea they must hide by day and move only by night. In three days and nights, due to their youth and woodcraft, they should be at the sea.

Tawi would there enlist the confidence of a kinsman who was a great fisherman, and who kept many *prahus*. Embarking by night with the fagots and six drums of gasoline, they would proceed to sea until they were three hours beyond the reef. Broken wings of the *Lady Bird* would then be cast upon the waters —and with them the oil from six drums.

Sworn to execute these instructions, the crew of runners took up the fagots. As they were being lashed on backs, Palawan inquired of Tawi: "Did you discover which of our people cast the spear which killed the white man yesterday?"

"It was Hadji Samal," Tawi answered.

Palawan made no comment. In a moment he gave the signal which sent the runners off. Jolo Palawan smiled slyly as the last of them faded into the bush.

He himself then moved on, not toward the house but away from it. A path led him to a second sheltered inlet where his own *Swallow* rode at anchor. Here he had left it at dawn, upon arriving from Guam.

Now he embarked and had himself towed into the lake. Taking off, he kept low over the water until he was too far from the house to be seen by its inmates. Then he set a course for Zamboanga.

"Roughest ridin' tub in the Navy!" Murphy grumbled, and no one was inclined to argue. The *Huron,* scuppers awash, was at this moment bucking rollers off Dapitan Point, at the east edge of the Sulu Sea.

This, according to Jolo Palawan, was about the place where he had last seen the Dreece plane.

"Post lookouts, fore and aft," directed Stacey.

Loud speakers répeated his order through the ship.

Lookouts quickly took positions to scan the rollers on both starboard and port side. To the starboard, beyond churning breakers, the shore palms of Mindanao were barely visible. Ahead lay a passage between the Sulu and Mindanao Seas.

"About fifty miles wide, the Mindanao Sea is," Stacey said to Murphy. "With the island of Mindanao on the south of it, and Negroes, Cebu, Bohol and Leyte on the north."

"What's at the end of it?"

"A gateway into the Pacific Ocean," the Navy man said. "But an island called Dingbat almost closes that gate.

So I imagine if Miss Dreece took a tide-water route, someone on Dingbat saw her go over."

"Unless she was too high," Murphy worried, "or—"

He didn't finish. The girl, he knew, could have gone down this side of Dingbat, in the Mindanao Sea.

Lurching with the roll of the boat, Murphy went to the wireless room.

"In touch with the *Ontario?*" he asked there.

"Right. She's heading to meet us. Take about three days, I imagine."

Murphy nodded dismally. Ten knots was about all they could make, and it was eight hundred miles to a point halfway to Guam. At the least it meant six days before the *Huron* could be back at Zamboanga.

"Hold on," the wireless man said. "Here's something else."

He took a mesage from Zamboanga. It was from Carmichael, announcing that Jolo Palawan had just arrived from Guam.

"Funny we didn't see him pass over us," mused Murphy.

According to the massage, Palawan reported failure to find any trace of the Dreece plane. He was haggard after the arduous round trip, and would rest. After which he offered to place his services and his airplane at the disposal of American authorities, for further scouting.

Murphy read the comunication thoughtfully.

"Wants to help us, does he?" he muttered. "Big-hearted, the sultan is." He scowled out over the glaze of rolling seas.

Then Stripes Murphy turned back to the wireless bench and wrote a message himself.

"It's a private message," he said, "to Roscoe Haliburton."

The wireless man, nodding, sent:

HALIBURTON—ZAMBOANGA
INSPECT NEW RECRUIT STOP MISS NOTHING. MURPHY.

BEING commander of the guard at Zamboanga for this day, Roscoe Haliburton was no little confused by the cryptic communication. What recruit? The three squads of marines on guard duty were composed of veterans.

Was Stripes pulling his leg, as usual? Hardly that, considering the tension of grim suspense which now gripped the entire detachment. With each passing hour the tension tightened. Stripes, out on the gunboat searching for Virginia Dreece, would feel it no less than the others.

Haliburton was on his way to the adjutant's office when he received the confusing message from Murphy. He turned in there to find the entire staff assembled about Jolo Palawan. The major was presiding, and Palawan was being belabored with inquiries. Over and over the Malay gave, with complete assurance, an account of his round trip flight to Guam.

No man among them seemed more concerned for the girl's fate.

He repeated his offer: "After I rest, consider me at your disposal for scouting. Naturally I'm giving up my trip to Honolulu."

He looked tired to the verge of collapse, thought Haliburton. And no wonder, after two non-stop flights of sixteen hundred miles each.

Just now he was waiting for Governor Torres, so that Torries and the Philippine constabulary could likewise receive his report.

Being on duty, Haliburton did not linger long. He proceeded to the guardhouse where the sentinel on post number one executed a snappy "present arms" at his approach.

Inside, the lieutenant sat down in the guard commander's office to reread Murphy's strange instruction, and to wonder what recruit it concerned. Somehow there was no sense to it.

"Inspect new recruit stop miss nothing."

Haliburton was so brooding when he heard number one sentinel sing out: "Turn out the guard! Commanding officer!"

Haliburton yawned. It simply meant that Post Commander Carmichael had left the conference at the adjutant's office and was about to pass here on his way home. This was likely to happen four or five times a day. Except on rare occasions the post commander would shout back—"Never mind the guard!", as prescribed by the Army's manual of interior guard duty.

Number one sentinel would then repeat, "Never mind the guard", and the ceremony of turning out the guard for inspection would be averted.

But if the post commander said nothing at all, and simply continued to advance, then the guard must rush from the guard-house and form for inspection. And now, to his mild surprise, Haliburton failed to hear any response from Carmichael. The sergeant of the guard was already routing out the men. Haliburton himself, as commander of the guard, went out. The C. O., he supposed, was in a touchy mood this morning. Probably thought a bit of discipline would be good for the general tension.

Nothing to do but let him inspect. Haliburton took his place stiffly, commanding: "Present, arms!" Facing Carmichael he saluted. "Sir, the guard is formed."

"Inspect your guard, sir," said Carmichael.

"Open—ranks!" shouted Haliburton.

As he passed down the ranks, Carmichael followed to observe the inspection. One guardsman's blouse button was loose, another man was insufficiently shaven, another lacked a shoe shine, while a fourth had a bit of dust on the barrel of his Enfield. Carmichael called terse attention to these delinquencies and then, possibly feeling better for this unleashing of his own mental strain, passed on.

"The old man never misses a thing,"

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one private muttered to another as they broke ranks.

Haliburton heard and it set him pondering. "Inspect new recruit and miss nothing!" What had he, Haliburton, missed?

He was gazing thoughtfully up the street when he saw Torres crossing toward the *gubernacion* with Jolo Palawan. Palawan, he knew, would be the governor's guest during his brief rest here. Palawan had just offered his services to the marines. Was that it? By new recruit did Murphy mean Palawan?

Haliburton advanced briskly and seemed by accident to overtake Torres and his guest. Greeting them, he managed to look the Malay over carefully from head to foot. It was the first time he had ever seen Palawan wearing baggy, uncreased trousers. And there was a smudge of mud on one of his white shoes. Fresh mud!

Haliburton's interest quickened, but he concealed the fact as he strolled on in casual company with the two men. They stopped before the *gubernacion.*

"As the Americans say," smiled Palawan, "I'm dead on my feet. So if you'll excuse me—"

They excused him. Palawan, who had often been a guest here, knew his quarters and retired to them immediately. Haliburton remained there for a while, prolonging a chat with Torres.

When he left, deep furrows were creasing the lieutenant's brow. He hurried on to send a wireless to Murphy.

MURPHY—ABOARD *HURON*
NEW RECRUIT NEEDS SHINE.
HALIBURTON.

"That monkey made *me* climb a tree," grinned Haliburton. "It's his turn now."

HIS face, however, was again sober when a few minutes later he called at Carmichael's patio.

"Sir," he said to the major, "I'm not sure we can believe this big-shot Moro."

Carmichael smiled. "Relax, Roscoe." He waved his junior fraternally to a chair. "Now what's on your mind?"

He passed cigarettes to put Haliburton at ease.

"It's this way, Major. He says he made two non-stop flights. Well, he's got a muddy shoe—and there's no mud except on land."

Carmichael was not impressed. "Wet sand, no doubt, picked up on the beach either here or at Guam."

"No sir. Mud," insisted Haliburton. "It's my hunch he stopped somewhere on the way here from Guam."

"Suppose he did. It was his privilege to stop if he liked."

"Listen, Major," Haliburton argued, "he was only at Guam a few hours. Around the landing there it's all concrete, boards and gravel. No mud even in a squall. And his pants need pressing. Notice 'em?"

The major smiled tolerantly. "You'd hardly be spick and span yourself, Roscoe, if you'd just made a round trip to Guam."

"It wouldn't take the crease out of my pants. Tell you what would, though. If I stepped out waist-deep into water and waded ashore somewhere, I'd get that way.

Why did it take Palawan so long to get here from Guam? Circling, tacking about it, scouting, he says. Do you believe it? If you flew in on a long nonstop flight, Major, what'd be the first thing you'd want?"

"A soft bed," said the major promptly.

"No sir, you'd want breakfast. Hot Java first and then a flop. But not the sultan. He went right to bed, and forgot to eat breakfast."

Carmichael raised an eyebrow. "Yes?"

"Means he'd had breakfast. Got it somewhere on the way. And I just picked up something from Torres, who's a straight shooter. He tells me Jolo keeps a mountain lodge high in the interior of Mindanao."

"Well?"

"Well, maybe we ought to find out if Miss Dreece is being held there," suggested Haliburton.

"Ridiculous, Roscoe. Your nerves are jumpy over this business, that's all. In the first place, she flew over tide water. How could he bring her down on a mountain top, a hundred miles from the sea? And why should he want to?"

"He's got a muddy shoe," said Haliburton stubbornly.

"Come now," the major derided, half amused. "Let's not start any international complications, just because a Moro *dato* has wet sand on his boot, missed breakfast probably for the reason that he'd taken sandwiches on the flight, and came in with baggy pants due to some rain encountered in the air. Remember, too, that we promised the Philippine legislature to keep out of the interior. They're doing a creditable job with this self government experiment, and we don't want to put chips on their shoulders.

"We could leave it to the local constabulary," Haliburton argued.

"And they'd laugh at us," exclaimed Carmichael.

Haliburton made a final plea. "There's two of us in on this hunch. Myself and Stripes Murphy. Can we have a two weeks leave, and go inland—"

"You're marine officers," the major broke in.

"We could go out of uniform, as civilians. Couple of botanists out after ferns, or butterflies, or something."

"Couple of squirrels out after nuts!" The major was beginning to lose patience. "You'd wind up with your heads on a pole!"

"We'll risk that, sir. If there's only one chance in a thousand the girl's up there, I think we ought to try."

"Very well," Carmichael said wearily. "If the *Huron* returns to report no trace of the flyers, you two monkeys can try it. As civilians. Don't claim kin with the marines, understand. Those mountaineer Malays ought to like you fellows. Your heads'll make such good rattles."

CHAPTER IV

BROKEN WINGS

VIRGINIA looked out through the *lanai* screen, her eyes anxiously searching the skies. It was mid-afternoon. Each moment weighed upon her with growing pressure as Max Raff failed to return.

Restlessly she crossed to a couch and sat down by Inda.

Inda regarded her with distrust. Why was this white girl here? Where was Jolo? It was all very strange, thought Inda.

Jolo Palawan had told her nothing of the truth. Inda, like her none too welcome guest, did not know that Max Raff had been killed by a Moro spear. She did not know that Jolo himself had flown yesterday to Guam, and that his stop here for breakfast had been en route back to Zamboanga.

All the Malay woman knew was that her husband had been mysteriously absent yesterday afternoon and last night. And that again today he was gone she knew not where. He was hiding something, she sensed. And because Inda was a jealous wife she conceived herself, and not Virginia Dreece, to be the victim of deceit.

"He cannot marry you," she asserted suddenly.

Virginia was startled.

After staring for a moment she laughed nervously.

"Who," she demanded, "c[illegible] me?"

"My husband. He alread[illegible]" said Inda, "and the Koran p[illegible]n but four wives."

A momentary panic seized Virginia. Here was an angle she hadn't thought of. With an effort she recovered poise. "What in the world are you driving at, Mrs. Palawan?"

Inda's mouth drooped stubbornly.

"Your father is not here," she said, "so it cannot be."

"What can't be?" The white girl was more confused than ever.

"Where is my husband? Has he gone to bring your father?"

"I have no father." Vi[illegible]t know whether to laugh or

By persistent questioni[illegible]w from Inda that among Mohammedan Malays, a marriage ceremony can be performed only by the bride's father. Clearly Inda was suspicious of a romance between the guest and Jolo, and fearful of being supplanted as Jolo's favorite wife. Three oldish and unbeautiful wives at Sulu did not disturb her at all, but a young and fair one would.

"But my dear!" Virginia protested as persuasively as possible. "I do not want your husband and he doesn't want me!"

Inda was incredulous. She could not imagine any woman not wanting the great and magnificent Jolo Palawan.

"It's so perfectly wild!" exclaimed Virginia. She tried to laugh, but came nearer bursting into hysterical tears.

Failing to convince Inda, she went again to the screen and stood with an imploring gaze on the skyline of mountain bush. This impossible situation *must* end! Why didn't Maxie come?

All the rest of the day, as she paced the *lanai*, she could feel Inda's dark, suspicious eyes. And when by nightfall Raff did not come, Virginia went wearily to her room. She locked herself in there, waiting. From without came terrifying silence.

AGAIN the girl lay sleepless until dawn.

At the first light she looked out to see only a black, bush-choked wall of wilderness. In a little while she heard bare feet padding in the hallways. Voices—but only Malay voices. There was no sound or sign of Max Raff.

He *must* come today, thought Virginia. She bathed, then went out with an assumption of good cheer to the front lawn. Nothing of more menace confronted her than a grinning house boy. He came from the forest with a basket of mangoes balanced on his shoulder.

Forcing boldness, the girl smiled at him and then went on down the path to the lake shore. Two Malays in a *prahu* were far out, fishing. A woman squatted at the water's edge, cleaning fish. A green bird scolded from the boughs of a banyan.

But no sign of the *Swallow*, or even of the *Lady Bird*. Then she remembered they had towed the *Lady Bird* to some more sheltered anchorage. Where? For an hour Virginia lingered wistfully by the lake, watching, hoping.

A boy servant appeared, salaaming, motioning toward the house. Beckoning her to breakfast, she supposed.

Returning to the bungalow, she found Inda seated at the *lanai* table. Virginia took the chair opposite.

"My husband—he did not come home." Inda said it accusingly, her lips pouting.

It *was* a mystery, thought Virginia. Lacking a plane to fly away in, how could Palawan be gone so long?

"Do you know where he is?" asked Inda.

"I do not," Virginia said. "And if you ask me that again, I'll scream."

She left the table and wandered restlessly through the house. In a wing of it well removed from her own room she saw, through an open door, a wall lined with books. Here was a library with a handsome Chinese rug on the floor. Jolo Palawan, she understood, was an educated man. This no doubt was his private den, for she saw a rack of pipes and a liquor cabinet.

Those books, somehow, looked friendly. They gave her a feeling that civilization was quite close, after all. So she entered the den, thinking perhaps to find something to read. Once inside, her eyes fell upon a modern radio.

Virginia brightened. A morning paper could not have been more welcome. A radio meant news reports. By tuning in on some broadcast she might hear her own fate being discussed. Had Max Raff reached Guam? If so, the outside world would know.

Virginia went to the radio and turned knobs. There was no response. Then she heard Inda's voice from the doorway.

"I have tried myself," the woman said, "but it is no use."

The radio was dead. No batteries. Lacking electric service Jolo Palawan would of course need to use storage batteries. And now the batteries needed recharging. Questioning Inda, Virginia learned that it was Palawan's habit to recharge them occasionally from the power of the *Swallow's* motor.

But the *Swallow* was now gone—with Raff.

With new terror Virginia returned to the veranda. In vain she waited there for Raff. Cruel fears haunted her now. Had Maxie, piloting an unfamiliar craft, crashed on land or sea between here and Guam? Or had he ever reached Guam?

For the last, she had only Inda and the word of Palawan.

Later in the day Palawan actually appeared. He came striding from the bush with a tired, strained face. Inda met him with a chatter of Malay. Jolo answered in kind, then turned with polite apology to Virginia.

"You must be distressed!" he exclaimed. "I cannot understand why Mr. Raff has not returned."

His look was so genuinely sympathetic that Virginia felt almost reassured. Not reassured of Raff's safety, but at least that her host was guiltless.

"I suppose he's assembling the parts," she sighed. "Surely he'll be here tomorrow."

A servant brought tea and cakes.

"But you do not say where you go," Inda complained, "these two days and nights."

"To certain of the villages nearby," he replied evasively.

"But why?"

Palawan gave a nervous laugh. "I didn't want to make you uneasy. But if you must know, my dear, there's been trouble of some kind among the people. Drums beating on Apo Mountain. It's under the surface—I've been trying to get to the bottom of it. A feud between villages, possibly."

More he would not say.

When night came without Raff, Virginia said to him: "Can't you send word by land? I mean, why can't a runner go down to Zamboanga?"

"You are right," he agreed promptly. "They should be notified without more delay. I shall get the runner started immediately."

Abruptly he left the house. Neither Virginia nor Inda saw him again for two days.

THE gunboat *Huron* cruised easterly through the Mindanao Sea, on past the island of Dingbat and into the open Pacific toward Guam.

Midway between Zamboanga and Guam she met her sister ship, the *Ontario.*

Officers of the two ships met on the *Huron's* deck.

"No sign of wreckage," each reported to the other.

Each gunboat had kept in touch by wireless with its base. Thus Stripes Murphy now became aware that no news whatever had been received from any source about the Dreece plane. He went moodily to the cabin. There he tuned in a radio on a world wide broadcast.

"Hope," he heard a Los Angeles announcer say, "is rapidly dissipating. Freighters and gunboats, private and Navy planes have scouted persistently but in vain."

In a little while Murphy heard a whir of wings overhead. He went out on deck,

looked up and saw Jolo Palawan's *Swallow* passing over. No one, he knew, had scouted this lane of travel more persistently than Palawan.

"Taking it hard, that fellow!" an officer remarked at Murphy's elbow. "Naturally he would, since he was racing her to Guam when it happened."

"He was, for a fact!" said Murphy thoughtfully. He cocked a speculative eye upward at the *Swallow*. Then, from his pocket, he fished a message sent him by Haliburton. "New recruit needs shine."

"Wonder what Roscoe's got on that buzzard!" Murphy muttered.

The *Ontario* turned about and started back for Guam. The *Huron* at the same time cruising back toward Zamboanga.

Again the *Huron* skirted Dingbat and nosed into the Mindanao Sea. Lookouts were still posted with all vigilance at both rails.

"We'll hold a bit further offshore, as we go back," decided Stacey.

When they were off Mal t
a lookout shouted, "Driftwo
Telegraphs jangled. "H: "
came from the bridge.

"Most likely seaweed," Murphy murmured, "or a palmetto stump." He went with others to the port rail as the ship veered ponderously toward the drift.

There had been other alarms, all proving to be either sea growth or forest drift. But this time the floating object proved to be a stick of milled lumber. Not far off was another one much like it. Moreover, a close scrutiny in this area revealed a faint rainbowish film on the water.

Stacey's taut voice ordered: "Stand by to lower boat. We'll have a look."

Murphy went with the boat crew. It was his own hand which reached over the gunwale to pick up a floating fragment which definitely was not ordinary drift. It was plywood, three one-eighth inch slabs glued together, with the grains at right angles. A smashed bit of cabinet partition, Murphy thought.

A second piece of drift seemed to be of the same fiber. Then Murphy looked on drearily as a kapok cushion was found floating less than half a mile away. He felt sure that the rainbowish film was from gasolene or oil.

Four hours the *Huron* cruised that vicinity, picking up in all more than a dozen scraps of wreckage. The handle end of a jointed oar was found. Feathers from the fallen *Lady Bird*.

A chief bos'n's mate said with finality, "Here's where she went down, sir."

A memory came bitterly to flog Murphy. He thought of his own cruel jest with Haliburton, on the pier at Zamboanga. There'd been an oily scum there too, he remembered, with two hulking, oafish brutes matching coins to see which—

Hating himself, Murphy returned to the *Huron's* deck. The crew stood by solemnly as piece by piece of the tell-tale drift was inspected by Stacey. Then a rheostat began clicking—announcing to the entire world the fate of Virginia Dreece.

THE flag before the old stone fort at Zamboanga was lowered to half mast. Carmichael said bitingly to Haliburton: "You see, that half-baked suspicion of yours looks rather stupid now, Lieutenant!"

"Yes, sir," said Haliburton.

He went to his quarters. In the morning he looked out and saw the *Huron* at anchor. A giant Navy hydroplane from Guam was riding out there, too. So was the little one-seater owned by Jolo Palawan. All scouting units, having been apprised of the *Huron's* find, had stopped searching and put in at the nearest port.

Haliburton was shaving when Murphy came in.

Haliburton snapped at him: "Well, I hope you're satisfied now, you big moose! You wanted her dropped in the drink, and now—"

"One more crack like that," glared Murphy, "and you can grab a harp!" He brandished a stick of plywood which he held in hand.

A look at his deep-lined face mollified Haliburton. "Sorry, Murph," he said. "I'm all on edge. Forget it."

"That'll be easy, for me, won't it?" said Murphy with a hard laugh. "All right. What about Palawan needing a shine?"

"Mud on his shoe, Murph, when he blew in off a so-called non-stop flight from Guam. Needed his pants pressed, too, and wasn't hungry."

"You jumped him about it?"

"No. But I jumped the C.O. He chased me out."

"Let's go jump Palawan." Murphy held up his plywood fragment, adding: "Here's a piece of it, Roscoe. Take a look."

"Three ply, glued together," his friend said after an inspection.

"I been keepin' it for a pet," Murphy said shrewdly. "Why? Because you can smash three-ply plywood—but you can't split it clean across three sets of grains unless you use an axe."

"Yeah?"

"Or a bolo!" said Murphy.

Their eyes met meaningly.

"Okay," Haliburton agreed. "Let's go jump Palawan."

They went over to the governor's house and found Palawan sipping absinthe in the patio there. Murphy confronted him, thunder-browed, and came straight to the point.

"If you flew non-stop from Guam last Thursday, why was there mud on your shoe?"

"Fresh swamp mud," Haliburton added.

Palawan stared back at them, then gave a weary smile.

"There was no mud on my shoe, gentlemen," he said politely. "Sand, possibly, but not mud."

"Where," Murphy demanded, "did you eat breakfast that morning? You've a house on the mountain, haven't you?"

"In the interior? Yes, of course."

"Haven't thrown a house party up there lately, have you—for two unwilling guests?"

Palawan's smile faded. He stood up and his eyes flashed indignantly. The accent of his response, however, was quite Oxford: "Your innuendos are too blunt to be misunderstood, gentlemen. I give you twenty-four hours to cool off and apologize. If you do not, I shall take the point up myself with your commander—and with Governor Torres."

The marine officers withdrew bellicosely.

"Better beat him to the punch," Murphy said, "and take it up with the C.O."

Haliburton shook his head. "No use. I tried that. What about going A.W.O.L.? Game? We could take a hike up that way, and look the joint over."

"Fat chance of getting there," growled Murphy. "I'd just as soon try, but the percentage'd be against us."

Haliburton looked out on the harbor, where the big Navy plane from Guam was still anchored. "All right. What about buying that swab of a Navy pilot a few drinks? He'll be hopping back to his base in a day or two. Maybe we could talk him into flying back over the mountain, and droppin' us in chutes."

"Now you're getting warm," said Murphy.

EACH hour of detention at the mountain house brought new terrors for Virginia. More and more the thing looked like treachery on the part of Palawan.

For ransom? She could hardly credit such a motive. Jolo Palawan was a rich man. Yet she had a sense of being held prisoner. True, no door was barred against her escape. She hadn't been asked to come, nor was there any command for her to remain. Only courteous treatment confronted her, except for Inda's stupid jealousy.

Each hour the Malay woman's attitude became more unbearable.

"You have the understanding with my husband?" she kept saying.

"I wish I did!" sighed Virginia.

"He make the love to you, yes?"

The white girl bit her lips and went fretfully out to the front lawn.

Could she make it to the coast, alone? Reason told her no. A hundred miles through a tangle of tropic bush was unthinkable. Rivers, swamps, crocodiles! But possibly she could find an honest guide, somewhere near.

Virginia was desperate enough by now to try anything. Today she saw a path leading off through the bamboos. It was a direction she had not yet explored. She took it, hoping against hope. Possibly she could find some reliable Moro, or half-caste—perhaps even a white man's plantation hidden in the wilderness. The path twisted on through thorns and tall-kneed banyans. For an hour Virginia followed it, only to be confronted at the end by a village of round rude huts. A pot-bellied child, at play in the foreground, stared at her. A yoke of water buffalo, hitched to a rude cart, stood with drooping heads, their tails switching at flies. Beyond, a hideous and almost naked old man grinned at her from the door of a hut. From other huts she felt curious, peering eyes.

Virginia advanced a step hesitantly. Then she stopped, shocked and trembling. What she saw was a row [illegible] skulls on poles.

Horror shackled her for [illegible] Then she turned, retreatin[illegible] She raced back to the only [illegible] knew—Palawan's.

Inda met her on the *lanai*.

"My husband have come again," the Malay woman said. "He do not say where he go."

Passing in distraction toward her own room, Virginia heard a sound which made her stop and listen. It came from the opposite wing of the house and was almost the last thing she would expect to hear here—low, melodious strains from a violin.

Then she knew it must be the radio in Palawan's den. Some artist with a master's touch was broadcasting, and Palawan had tuned in. Which meant he must have recharged those dead batteries. The girl stood there, concentrating intently. The batteries, according to Inda, had to be recharged from the power of the *Swallow*.

But if the *Swallow* had been flown away by Max Raff, who had not returned, how could—

Like a stinging, smothering blanket, definite conviction of her host's perfidy swept over Virginia. Raff, she knew now, had never flown way in that plane. All the while Palawan had been using it himself. It would account for his reticence, his mysterious absences and sudden returns.

Determined to have it out with him, Virginia went resolutely down a corridor to the opposite wing. She stopped at the den door, from beyond which still came the strains of a violin. Now she could at least unmask Palawan. She could demand that he tune in on a news broadcast, and so summon the outer world as a jury to convict his deceit.

The girl tried the door. It was locked. She knocked.

Instantly the music from within stopped.

"Who is it?" called Palawan's voice.

"Miss Dreece. May I come in?"

In the den, Jolo Palawan pulled a plug which disconnected the radio from his recently recharged storage batteries. He crossed then to a closet, from which he produced a violin and bow. With these in hand, he suavely unlocked the door to admit Virginia.

She saw him standing there—with the violin. Her eyes shifted with a challange toward the radio. She was baffled. Of course it had been the radio. But she could never prove it.

Assembling her wits, Virginia forced amity into her voice.

"Do I intrude?" she smiled. "I heard you playing. Please don't stop—that Nocturne in E minor is one of my favorites."

He couldn't play a note of it, she thought.

Jolo bowed her inside and she sat down.

"If my poor talent pleases you," he said, "I shall be happy."

With all the flourish of a concert impresario Jolo Palawan raised the violin, tucked the bowl of it under his chin, swung the bow outward and up, brought it down as though to strike some grand Amen.

But with an ironic twang, a string snapped.

"So sorry!" the Malay exclaimed with a grimace. He held forth the instrument to expose its broken string.

The farce of this lost chord was clear to Virginia. The radio *had* been playing. But if she tried it now, she knew it wouldn't respond.

Here, she conceded dismally, was another impasse from which she could only retreat.

WHEN she did retreat, Jolo Palawan relocked his door. The smile faded from his face to be replaced by an expression barely less harassed than Virginia's. Jolo paced the den with dark forebodings. He too faced an impasse, one from which he could not even retreat.

The girl was on his hands, and—what now? Definitely he did not dare deliver her safely to the coast. Even though he could say there'd been no abduction and prove it by her own testimony, still he must keep her here, by passive strategy, to save his own skin.

Yet eventually authorities would look here. Thorns in the flesh of Palawan, especially, were two officiously suspicious marines at Zamboanga.

From the one simple, obvious solution Palawan flinched. To destroy the girl by overt act was not in his character. If she were a man, yes. But he could not bring himself to command the destruction of a lovely young white girl. That far, at least, an Oxford training had put shackles on Jolo Palawan.

He was, none the less, a Malay autocrat. He came from a race of pirates and slavers. Therefore his conscience would not be disturbed if the girl's stay here should become indefinitely, and at last interminably, prolonged. But it must be made safe. How?

Palawan, pacing moodily, stopped before a barred window. The bars were there because of costly ornaments decorating this den. An ivory-hilted barong on the wall, for instance, might especially lure some thieving tribesman.

Through the barred window Jolo now glimpsed Virginia Dreece. She was at the foot of the lawn, staring wistfully toward the lake. She was beyond hearing now. So Jolo crossed to the radio, replugged the battery wire and tuned in on Zamboanga.

The news broadcast he had been waiting for at the moment of Virginia's intrusion, was now in progress.

"—while the entire world mourns the fate of this intrepid aviatrix, Virginia Dreece" came to Palawan now. He listened to more of it.

A glow came to his face when he heard his own name mentioned. He was referred to as a Malay sportsman who had been racing her to Guam, and as one who had been indefatigable in
Always they would know h
New York and in London.

A paid ransom! thought H
without even a demand. More would be heaped on him, wherever he should go. This he had striven for, thinking merely to keep the girl as a guest over one night. But now the calcium light would be even more blinding. He, who was pacing Virginia Dreece to Guam when she went down!

If he could only avoid penalties. If he could checkmate the hazard of a search at this house!

All night Jolo Palawan kept to his den, thinking of a way out, yet banning from his mind the alternative of deliberate murder.

And at daybreak Virginia herself came with a solution.

When he opened the door she stood there, hands clenched, her face white and drawn. He could see she had not slept.

"I shall not wait longer," she said wearily. "Will you arrange an escort for me? I must start right now for the coast."

She looked at him with a hopeless challenge, as though expecting refusal.

Instead Palawan smiled and agreed readily. "Very well, Miss Dreece. I will assemble an escort and you can start directly after breakfast."

The glibness of his response startled her. Her eyes probed him, then she went to her room to get ready.

And Jolo sent immediately for a tribesman named Hadji Samal. According to Tawi, it was Hadji Samal who had cast the fatal spear at Max Raff.

Samal appeared and Jolo said to him in Malay: "Bring an escort of thirty men. The white girl desires conduct to the coast."

Samal's eyes flickered. He dropped to his knees and touched forehead to the rug. Then he withdrew to recruit the escort.

THIRTY Malay savages, within an hour, were assembled on the lawn. Four of them bore a rude sedan of boughs on which to carry the girl. All were armed with spears and krises. Samal stood at their head.

Hadji Samal, the killer of a white man! Samal, who had a skin of his own that needed saving. Jolo in his heart knew quite well that this wily savage would never arrive, with or without his charge, at tide water. There would be an accident—an upset, perhaps—as they were crossing a river. Trust Hadji Samal, thought Palawan, not to transport this witness into the courts of white men.

She had asked for it, hadn't she? Palawan was unwilling to order her destruction, but if she destroyed herself, he could wash his hands of it like a smug Pontius Pilate.

If the dark mystery of the bush should claim her forever, everything would be solved for Jolo Palawan. And still he could always say he hadn't abducted her, had not detained her, had not forbidden her wilful departure from the shelter of his house.

Virginia came out with Inda. Inda, not unwilling to godspeed one whom she looked upon as a dangerous rival, had equipped the white girl with stout clothing suitable for the bush.

But Virginia stopped on the porch, shocked at sight of the escort. Those spears and krises frightened her. She saw blackened teeth, naked bodies, savage faces. Head-hunters, she was sure. The girl stared helplessly for a moment, then shrank back.

"Is there no one else—to take me?"

"You do not trust them?" Palawan asked regretfully.

"How could I? Please s
away."

Jolo waved a hand in disn
mediately the escort withdrc
bush.

"It is distressingly evident," Jolo said in an injured tone to the girl, "that you do not trust me, either."

"How can I?" Virginia faced him with trembling lips. "You say you sent a runner to the coast days ago. But help does not come."

"That has puzzled me, too," said Jolo with a shrug. "But you recall that I spoke of certain unrest among the mountain people. Something under the surface, I do not know what. Perhaps for that reason the runner failed us. He and his people fear to bring the law here, possibly. Who can say?" He spread his hands in a gesture of mystification.

She checked an impulse to call him a

lying hypocrite. Calling names would do no good.

"But I *must* go somewhere," she pleaded.

He had been waiting for this. Now he acquiesced as to the inevitable.

"There's an old mission ten miles from here, across the lake," he asserted, after pondering for a moment.

"A mission?"

He nodded. "An old Spanish priest lives there—or did. His faith is not mine, and so I do not know him. By last account his health was feeble, but I think he still keeps the mission. If you prefer his protection to mine, I can send you over in a *prahu*."

A priest! She clutched eagerly at the alternative. In a *prahu* she need only take her maid and one boy to paddle across the lake.

"Let me go to the priest," she said desperately. "Now."

"At once," agreed Palawan, his face a mask.

The Malay woman and the boy he summoned were of Virginia's own choosing. Ten minutes later, with no other company than these, the girl was being conveyed in a prahu across the lake.

The instant she was gone, Palawan sent for Tawi.

Waiting for Tawi, he called Inda into his den and said to her: "You love me? You value my life?"

"More than my own," Inda said. She put her arms about his neck and looked up adoringly.

"Take heed, then. If soldiers or constables come here to ask questions, your answers must be the same as mine. Is it understood?"

Inda promised.

"Make it clear," he instructed, "that all the household must do the same."

Tawi appeared and Palawan repeated this direction.

Then he went down the shore to the *Swallow*, and took off for Zamboanga. Things were shaping up now. Jolo Palawan could see an end to his impasse.

AT THE Arab's pub across the harbor from Zamboanga, Stripes Murphy ordered one more drink for Ensign Blanchard, U.S.N.

And Haliburton once more tried persuasion. "Listen, all you got to do is fly back to Guam via that interior lake. You take Murph and me along. We drop off in chutes, and you fly on."

Blanchard was stubborn.

"And get myself court-martialed!" he protested. "You marines give me a pain!"

"So you won't do it, you swab?" challenged Murphy. As a marine, he never had thought very much of the Navy.

"Not," decreed the ensign, "unless you get permission from your C.O. In writing. So I can use it for an alibi at Guam."

Murphy glanced aggrievedly toward Haliburton. "You've been wasting your time and money, guy, buyin' drinks for this sailor. He hasn't got any heart."

"*Me* buy him drinks!" exclaimed Haliburton. "How could I? Look, I'm stony." He exposed empty pockets to prove it.

Murphy caught his eye and did the same.

"Can't be helped," Murphy said just as the Arab brought around the check, "but I guess the Navy's stuck for it. Come on, Roscoe."

They left Blanchard to bicker with the Arab and went out.

An hour later they presented themselves at headquarters in Zamboanga. As a last resort they must appeal once more to the major.

The major was in, but to the surprise of his callers was now being confronted by both Jolo Palawan and Governor Torres. And Palawan, they could see, had a chip on his shoulder.

Carmichael cocked an eye at his juniors as they entered.

"Here they are now," he said.

"He beat us to the punch," Murphy whispered to his friend. Both of them scowled at Palawan.

Palawan said stiltedly: "T
sumed to place a cloud o
Sorry to annoy you, Major,
will satisfy me except a
vestigation."

"Just what," the major asked, "do you propose?"

"That you yourself, together with Governor Torres, pay a visit to my house in the interior. My wife is there with her servants. You may question them all."

"I think he is right," Torres said softly.

"How would we get there?"

"The lake makes a convenient landing," Jolo explained. "I suggest you go in the Navy plane, now at anchor here. I will fly in my own and you can follow to my house."

To Murphy he looked like a fakir with sleeves rolled back, ready to perform some sleight of hand. However, after a quick exchange of glances with Haliburton, Murphy saw fit to abet the suggestion.

"With your permission, sir," he said to Carmichael, "I think no place should be overlooked in the search for Miss Dreece. We didn't mean to insult the sult—I mean Mr. Palawan. But since he thinks we did, it ought to be cleared up."

"It is justice to do so," purred Torres. He was an honest man himself, but it would be well to console his number one taxpayer.

"Humph!" said Carmichael doubtfully. He drummed on the table, weighing certain values of diplomacy. Then he drew Torres aside for a consultation.

"All right, gentlemen," the major decreed at last. He buzzed for the adjutant and directed him to send for Ensign Blanchard, U.S.N.

An hour later Jolo Palawan flew eastward in his *Swallow*. Blanchard followed in the big navy plane, with Carmichael and Torres as passengers.

"Be careful not to land too near the shore," Palawan had warned. "If you go down where I do, all will be well."

Palawan landed well out in the lake, and the Navy plane came booming to the water nearby. The motors had been heard from ashore. Almost immediately a dozen *prahus* put out from the bush, paddled by Malays. Palawan, Carmichael, Torres and Blanchard disembarked into the *prahus* and were conveyed ashore.

Palawan ushered them up a path to his bungalow. Inda greeted them there, and the visitors saw a scene of reassuring domesticity. After explanations from her husband, Inda took them through the house. Servants were mustered and those few who understood English were questioned.

No one, it appeared, had seen either Virginia Dreece or her observer. Had they seen a plane fly over last Wednesday? No, not even Palawan's.

Carmichael made a perfunctory round of the grounds and outbuildings. Palawan insisted on it.

There was no trace of the girl, not even a footprint. The host stood by in injured dignity.

"It's all rather stupid," he said in his best Oxford tone.

The major thought so too. What possible motive could a rich man like Palawan have for immuring prisoners at this lodge?

After Palawan had served champagne, Torres said heartily: "The young lady and her companion would have been fortunate indeed, had they landed here. I myself could not imagine a more pleasant fate."

He raised his cup gallantly to Inda.

Villagers were brought in, paraded, questioned with Tawi as interpreter. Had they seen a plane crash in the bush? No.

Of course not, thought Carmichael, the wreckage having been found at sea.

After renewed apologies to Palawan, the major, the governor and the ensign took their departure. Jolo Palawan stood on the shore smiling as he watched them fly away.

A hand without pushed the hinged sash open.

CHAPTER V

THE LEATHERNECK WAY

ON THE other side of the lake, it seemed to Virginia that she could hear faintly in the distance the humming of an aircraft. During these last hours she had been more desolate than ever. For this old stone mission was half fallen down; a glance told her that it had been deserted for years. Rats overran it. There was no roof. But now a faint and distant humming brought her hope. Was it Maxie, back after all from Guam?

Or was it marines out scouting from Zamboanga?

The irony was that she couldn't recross the lake. Upon disembarking from the *prahu* she had gone upslope to the mission with the Malay woman and the boy. Only to find ruins and no priest. Nothing but crumbling walls overgrown with vines. And only to find, after returning forlornly to the lake shore, that the *prahu* was gone.

"Some feller steal him," the boy thought.

Anyway it was gone.

The three went back to the mission ruins. Dark came, and through a dreary night they huddled there. Silence for hours, then strange weird cries from the bush. Huge bats whirred by. Virginia shivered—giant fruit bats winging black and hideous against the moon.

Terrors chilled her as she waited despairingly for the dawn.

It came at last, with cloudy skies and a mist of rain.

Then she heard the boy shouting. When Virginia went to him, she saw the

lost *prahu* drifting near the lake shore. It had been restored to them as mysteriously as it had been withdrawn.

The rain quickened presently, drenching the girl. The ruins were untenable, she knew. Nor could she forget that distant humming of a motor yesterday. Whether or not it promised relief, her only choice was to retreat in humiliation to Palawan's.

The boy waded out, brought the *prahu* to her feet. In it they crossed the lake.

Jolo greeted her with raised eyebrows, but she knew his show of surprise was a mockery.

"The priest?" he inquired.

"Has been gone for years. And you knew it."

He denied it sorrowfully. "You are unjust to me, Miss Dreece."

"A plane flew over yesterday," she said. "Who was in it?"

"A Navy plane flew over, high, but did not land."

She fought back the tears.

"Why do you keep me here?" she demanded.

"I do not keep you here," he said.

"But you are. You do. You—" Virginia turned away helplessly. No use to upbraid him. If he wanted to he could have her killed. Why didn't he? She went to her room like a trapped bird.

Rain pattered steadily on the roof. The storm waxed to a driving, tropic squall. By nightfall, it was pounding like stone hammers on the girl's nerves. Had he killed Maxie? Was that why he didn't let her go?

Inda knocked at the door. She came with dry clothing and a pot of steaming tea. Accepting these brought new humiliation, but again Virginia had no choice. When Inda was gone she changed, drank the tea. Then she lay on the couch with her senses wincing.

Another knock. She thought it was the Malay maid coming to take away the tea tray.

"Come in," Virginia said. She lay waiting listlessly for the door to open.

But the door did not open. Instead, the knock was repeated. The sound was strangely cautious. This time she knew it was not at the door but at the window. Someone was out there in the dark. Fearfully the girl crossed to the window, saw rain running in rivulets down the pane.

Then a hand without pushed the hinged sash open. The head and shoulders of a white man, bedraggled and half drowned, were framed there. Water dripped from the brim of his hat. With stark astonishment she saw that it was a marine officer's campaign hat.

"Miss Dreece!" he called hoarsely.

She knew him then. Lt. Murphy from Zamboanga! Relief at seeing him there almost made her knees give way.

He came crawling in, soaked to the skin, and closed the window. Looming bearishly in the candlelight, he was like some fantastic apparition of unreality until she saw the wry Irish smile on his mouth. Murphy! Of them all, why should it be Murphy? She remembered him as the cross, unfriendly officer, the only one who hadn't been cordial at Zamboanga.

"Door bolted?" he whispered.

She locked it, then turned to stare at him. He had picked up a towel and was mopping rain from his face and neck. He was more than [illegible]—fatigue lined his features; thor[illegible] were there too, and his unifor[illegible] tered with mud.

Murphy sat down on the [illegible]

"I'm all in," he admitted.

"You came in that Navy plane—yesterday?"

He nodded, grinning. "Stowed away in the fuselage."

He beckoned her closer, then lowered his voice to make quick, jerky interrogations. Where had she been yesterday at Carmichael's inspection? What happened to Raff? How were they treating her? What was Palawan's game, anyway?

In whispers she told him everything she knew. She could only guess about

Raff. Murphy in turn explained to her that Palawan had been using his plane almost every day. "Parading up and down the sea, the buzzard! Tried to make everyone think he was Sir Galahad out to rescue the fair damsel!"

She learned of the major's farcical inspection.

"I flew up with them but they didn't know it," he grinned. "When they went ashore I dropped into the lake and swam for the bush."

Since then he had skulked in the thickets, watching, still not convinced that she wasn't a prisoner. At last he had seen her return across the lake in a *prahu* with two Malays.

"Where does he keep the *Swallow?*" Murphy asked.

"He hides it somewhere down the shore, I suppose."

"I got to find that crate," he said. "It's our only out."

"Can you fly it?" she asked him.

"No. But *you* can. Soon as it quits raining, I'll slip out and look around for it."

The prospect alarmed her. The bush, she warned, was full of savages.

"Don't I know it?" he grimaced. "Been playin' hide-and-go-seek with 'em ever since I blew in."

\ STEP in the hallway. Then knock. This time it was sure be a Malay woman coming or the tray.

Virginia put a finger to her lips, then pointed. Murphy nodded. He moved stealthily to a wardrobe closet, entered and hid there. The girl opened the door to hand out the tray.

"I'm tired," she said to a servant. "Please don't disturb me any more."

She re-bolted the door and Murphy emerged.

They sat down on the couch to take stock.

"Two chances," Murphy said. "One's a getaway in Palawan's crate. The other's that chucklehead, Haliburton."

"Is he coming with help? Oh—"

Murphy frowned and shook his head. "He doesn't even know where I am. No one does, down there. And they think you crashed at sea."

"Then how can Lt. Haliburton help us?"

"Roscoe is a good guesser. I'm A.W.O.L. So he'll want to know why and where. Bet a nickel he's already pestering the C.O. for permission to run me down. Always trying to muscle in on things, that guy is."

They listened to the drumming of rain. He told her about the cruise of the *Huron,* and how he himself had picked up her wreckage at sea.

"It got me," he said in a strained voice.

She looked at his haggard profile, at the bullet scar on his face, at the sharp outthrust of his jaw. They'd kill him, she thought, and felt a terror greater than any before. He'd be killed like Maxie Raff if he stayed here—

"Please go," Virginia begged. "And don't come back, alone. Just tell people I'm here and they'll manage to get me out, some way."

"By the time I could tell people, you might not be here," he argued. "No, I'm here and I'm sticking. One thing, I want to take a poke at Palawan."

When the rain slackened, he insisted on going out to scout for the *Swallow.* No argument of Virginia's could deter him.

"I'll pop back in just before daylight," Murphy said. He slipped from the window and disappeared into damp darkness.

Virginia waited there, restless, flogged by the direst apprehensions. They'd catch that marine, she was sure. She pictured him being hacked to pieces by krises.

At the best he was now groping through sodden bush, blindly, stumbling into pitfalls and sloughs in an all but hopeless search for Palawan's plane. There might be a guard over it, even

if he found it. She despaired of ever seeing him again.

But just before dawn he returned. He slipped in dripping, his eyes bloodshot, his uniform in rags now. "Got a cigarette, lady?" Murphy smirked cheerfully to dissemble his fatigue. "And what chance for a cup of Java?"

She gave him a cigarette and made plans.

When the maid knocked, Virginia called through the door that she had a headache and would like breakfast in her room.

The tray came; she shared cereal, fruit and coffee with Stripes Murphy. The curtains were drawn and the door bolted. Discovery could be diverted, she thought, so long as they spoke in whispers.

"You must sleep now," she said.

He took a service automatic from his pocket, wiped it dry, put it under the pillow of the bed. Then, with Virginia on guard, he tried to sleep. It was broken sleep; time and again footsteps in the hall made her shake him awake. In mid-morning a maid came to straighten the room. Murphy hid himself in the wardrobe closet while the woman made the bed. Virginia, her nerves like needles, finally got rid of her with: "Don't bother any more. I'll look after it myself from now on."

"Does she savvy English?" Murphy asked when he emerged.

"She says yes to everything, so I can't be sure."

At the evening dinner hour Inda came to the door. Was her guest feeling better? Would she join Inda and Palawan on the *lanai?*

"I'm not up to it, thank you," Virginia answered cautiously. "But I *am* hungry. Can you send me in something, please?"

Murphy, as a result, dined on wine and choice steak cut from the rump of a *carabao.*

"I'll spot that crate tonight, on a bet," vowed Murphy.

But he did not. Nor the night following. For two days he concealed himself in Virginia's room, between futile prowls for the airplane of Jolo Palawan.

"It's bound to be close by," he argued, "because the sultan's here himself."

Not to arouse suspicions, Virginia on the third morning joined Palawan and Inda at breakfast. It was a risk to leave Murphy by himself. But the Palawans must not begin to wonder why she kept so constantly to her room. Also she was out of cigarettes. There was a humidor of them on the *lanai* and she wanted to smuggle some back to Murphy.

Palawan was preoccupied, she thought. Beyond a polite inquiry for her health, he had nothing to say.

Then, as the girl returned down the hallway toward her room, she was confounded to see the door of it wide open. Murphy was in there, she knew. Entering herself, Virginia found a Malay maid at work. She had swept out, refilled the water pitcher and was now pulling sheets off the bed.

Virginia said quickly, "Never mind, please." She tried to keep her eyes from Murphy's closet refuge.

The woman looked at her dumbly, then went on working. Inda must have instructed her, Virginia thought, to change the linen.

Inda herself then entered wi[illegible] basket of papayas. She put it on th[illegible] spoke in Malay to the maid [illegible] moved toward the closet for

Virginia came near to fai[illegible] the maid opened the closet door. But Murphy was not there. Had he taken flight by the window? In broad daylight, with the compound alive with Malays, he would be seen and taken to Palawan!

Inda went out. The serving woman completed her work and followed. Virginia locked the door, rushed to the window, opened it and looked out. No sign of Murphy. No hue and cry for him. Two Malays were lazily hulling coconuts on the lawn.

Then a sound made her turn and she saw Murphy. Flat on his chest, he was

squirming from under the bed. He sat up on the floor, cross-legged, looking up at her.

"That was a close one," he grinned.

The let-down was so ridiculous that Virginia broke into wild, hysterical laughter. Tears rolled down her face.

"Everything *else* has happened to me!" she cried. "Everything but finding a marine under the bed!"

"It *is* one for the book!" Murphy chuckled. "But don't tell Roscoe."

She sank to the floor beside him, put a cigarette between his lips and lighted it.

AT NOON Inda came to say that Palawan wanted to see her.

"This time bolt the door while I'm gone," Virginia whispered.

She was away ten minutes and returned in perturbation.

"Something's up," she reported to Murphy. "Inda's packing. Getting ready to leave with the servants. Palawan says I should go with her—to h[illegible]"

"Got the wind up about [illegible] huh?" muttered Murphy, th[illegible] "Where is he now?"

"In the den. I found him at the radio there. He shut it off when I went in. Then he told me there's an uprising of the tribes. He says it's best we all move to one of the peaceful settlements on the other side of the mountain. He says—"

"Horse feathers!" Murphy derided. "More likely the radio tipped him to another inspection headed this way. Marines, maybe, out looking for me."

She hoped it was that. But it might be, she thought in alarm, that Palawan had discovered Murphy's presence here. Was that why he was getting all women and servants out of the way? So there would be no witness to Murphy's murder?

"Anyway it's a showdown," Murphy said. He puffed hard on his cigarette, wits sparking. "All right. Let's get in on this ourselves, Virgie. Can we ever make it to the den without being seen?"

"But that's where Palawan is!"

"And just where we want him," said Murphy. He picked up his service automatic.

"This," he added grimly, "makes all men equal, in or out of the bush."

The girl opened the door, peering each way along the corridor. The coast was clear, she said. Murphy followed stealthily into the hall and she led him to the den.

Palawan was there, at the radio, and before he could cry an alarm Murphy had the gun at his ribs. "Bolt the door, Virgie."

Jolo, after a momentary wince, stood his ground with remarkable aplomb.

"So I have another guest!" he murmured.

"Listen, Sultan. We're calling your wife in here. I'm banking she doesn't want your head shot off, and there's just one way she can keep it on."

"Yes? Interesting! Go on."

"Ring that bell, Virgie."

The girl pulled a cord which rang a bell used by Palawan to summon service. When one of the house boys knocked at the door, she called through it: "Please ask Inda to come here."

Inda, when she was admitted, saw a battered, thorn-scratched marine with blood-shot eyes. He was holding a gun against her husband.

"You fancy this sheik of yours?" suggested Murphy. "Don't want to start digging his grave, do you?"

"You must not kill him!" gasped Inda.

"I won't if certain things happen—fast," Murphy said. "If they don't happen just as I say, he's a gone gosling."

She gave a cry of dread, then backed a frantic step toward the door.

"Hold on!" Murphy warned. "Sure you can call in the head hunters. They can hack me into forty slices. No argument there. But not before I squeeze this trigger just once. Once'll be enough. Is that clear?" He gave Palawan a prod with the automatic.

Staring at him in terror, Inda nodded.

"All right. The sultan has an air crate somewhere near. Tell his boss head hunter to have it towed to the foot of the path, ready for a take-off. No sabotage! Miss Dreece will then walk down the path to it, alone, get in and fly away. I'll be looking out that barred window. If I don't see her fly away, I start a little sabotage of my own on Palawan."

Virginia broke in with a protest. "But you? How will *you* get away?"

"Never mind me. I'm a marine, and the marines always get away. Did you get that straight, Inda?"

"It is understood," the woman said in a choked voice.

"Repeat the instruction to her—in English, Palawan. Say you want it that way. Warn her that if things fail to happen exactly as directed, she'll be a widow by sundown."

Palawan repeated the instructions. He added: "When it is arranged, Inda, you yourself go to the nearest village. Take the servants. If there is fighting, it is best for you to be away from it."

"But I do not know if Tawi will obey me," Inda objected. "He obeys only my husband."

"Call in Tawi," Palawan suggested. "He can hear the plan confirmed from my own lips."

"Okay," Murphy agreed. "Call in Tawi and tell him to park his bolo outside. Not a bad idea to let him get the dope straight from the sultan. This Tawi's the boss head hunter, I suppose?"

"He's a chieftain of my people," Jolo said.

Inda retreated from the room and again Virginia bolted the door.

Murphy instructed her to watch from the barred window, and to warn him if she saw anyone creeping up from the outside.

While they waited for Tawi, Murphy continued to emphasize his position to Palawan.

"I will not only see Miss Dreece fly away safely, but I shall know she arrives in Zamboanga. Because beginning one hour after she leaves I'll keep this radio tuned in on the station there. And her first act upon arriving will be to speak to me over the air."

The Malay bowed his head in apparent surrender. His murky eyes, however, were already swimming with schemes to checkmate this bold marine.

Murphy, watching him alertly, thought he could read the man's purpose.

"Sure you can have the wires pulled from the outside," he admitted, "and kill the radio. But if that happens, or anything else goes wrong, it means a funeral for Jolo Palawan. Keep your mind on that all the time. Either M[illegible] speaks to me before sundown [illegible]bo, or I drill you."

"And after that, what?" w[illegible]ginia. She was thinking not of herself now but of Murphy.

"After that, you report to the major and he sends relief. If I can keep awake long enough, everything ought to be jake."

A TAP on the door. Virginia opened it warily and a tall Moro savage stepped in, unarmed.

"Your man Tawi?" questioned Murphy.

Palawan nodded.

"Give him the lowdown—in English."

"He understand only Malay," said Palawan.

Murphy shrugged. "All right. If you're tired of living, tell him in Malay to sabotage the plane. Tell him anything you want to—but it's the last thing you'll ever tell anybody if Miss Dreece fails to speak to me from Zambo."

Palawan spoke to Tawi in Malay. His guilefully amended instructions were: "Tawi, go to the airplane and take out all the gasolene except one inch. Then tow the plane to the foot of the path. Permit the white girl to embark in it unmolested, so that this fool may see her fly away. When her fuel is expended and

she is forced down in the bush, you and your men will seize her. She can then summon no assistance from her friends. As for this soldier, he can keep awake to hold the gun on me only so many hours. He will not shoot me in cold blood. White soldiers never shoot a passive, unresisting prisoner. When he drops from exhaustion, I myself shall finish him with that ivory-hilted barong on the wall."

Tawi signified that it was clear to him.

"When the plane is ready at the foot of the path, call out to us."

Tawi dropped to his knees, touched his forehead to the rug, then arose and withdrew from the room.

"For your sake, Sultan," Murphy glowered, "I hope you gave him the straight goods."

"I wonder if he really did!" worried Virginia. She had been well schooled in the trickeries of Palawan.

"I've a hunch he did," Murphy said cheerfully. "He's a vain rooster, and vanity like to keep on breathing."

They waited. Minutes were hours. But the afternoon was only half expended when a shout came from without the barred window. It was Tawi, reporting that the plane was ready as ordered.

"Go now, Virginia," Murphy said.

Her feet were like lead as she stood looking at him. "I can't bear to! And leave you like this."

"It's your only chance, and mine," he insisted. "Wait, let's make it trick-proof. So nobody can fake your voice, I mean, when you seem to speak to me from Zamboanga. I'll give you a password. Only when I hear that password will I know you're safe at Zambo."

"A password?"

"Sure." He stepped close and whispered in her ear. The four words she heard were: "Never mind the guard!"

"Now go, please," he urged.

She went reluctantly toward the door, but turned there. A flush chased pallor from her cheeks as she came back. She stood on tiptoes and kissed his lips.

Then she was gone. Murphy, keeping the gun on Palawan, rebolted the door.

VIRGINIA saw no sign of Inda or of any servants as she passed through the house to the front *lanai*. Evidently Inda had evacuated the premises in obedience to Palawan. The lawn, too, was deserted.

She went down the steps, crossed the lawn, took the descending path toward the lake. At the bend of the path she saw the water, with the *Swallow* about fifty yards from the shore.

Then she was aware of eyes watching her. She saw the sharp end of a spear; a Moro was peering from the bush. Another. And still more of them. Silent and half hidden, they were lining the path on either side.

Resolutely she moved on, step by step down the path to the lake.

Her flesh was icy by the time she had passed through that lane of spears and arrived at the water's edge. Fifty yards of lake, muddy after the rains, still separated her from the *Swallow*. Wading to it, amidst whatever reptilian creatures might lurk under that brown surface, filled her with new dread.

Then, as she hesitated, two of the Moro savages stepped from the bamboos and stood on either side of her. The krises at their loins and their ba ing bodies, so close, almost para But they only locked hands t carriage. With signs, they indic... ingness to carry her to the plane.

One of them was Tawi. The other was Hadji Samal, assassin of Max Raff. Touching them brought shivers, but the girl steeled herself to sit on the carriage of their locked hands and be carried to the *Swallow*. It should be safer this way, she thought. No spear would come flying from the bush so long as she perched between the shoulders of these chiefs.

Reaching the *Swallow*, they hoisted her dryshod to the cockpit and returned to the shore. And the feel of the stick

brought a rush of confidence to Virginia. She hadn't won her wings without flying many types of aircraft and she knew she could manage
Unless there'd been sabotage!
the motor. It responded reac
must hurry now. Murphy was
holding a gun on Palawan. She mustn't fail Murphy. He could survive only if she sent him prompt relief.

With quick nervous hands she tested the controls. Magneto right. Magneto left. The gas gauge was low, she noticed, but the oil pressure seemed sufficient. Anyway there was no choice. From here on it was a race between her own wings and Murphy's death.

When the motor was warm, she sent the plane cautiously along the water toward midlake. Watch out for snags and mud banks! She was clear of them now. At last her pontoons left the water. She drew the stick to her, soaring. Well up, she banked to the right and circled back over Palawan's house. From his window Murphy must see her aflight.

When she was certain he had, Virginia zoomed for altitude and headed west. Zamboanga, she knew, was that way. Once there she must speak a password. To Murphy. "Never mind the guard!" She kept repeating it in her mind as she sped on toward the setting sun.

STRIPES MURPHY did hear her motor and he did see her from his barred window. Relaxing with relief, he began then to calculate his own chances. How long could he dominate Palawan?

By his wrist watch it was now four o'clock. On a bee line it was slightly more than a hundred miles to Zamboanga. Not knowing the *Swallow's* speed, Murphy guessed that she could make the distance by five-thirty at the latest, by five at the earliest. Then, if the marines could muster two sizable airplanes, they should have a squad of leathernecks here in short shift. Blanchard's Navy plane might still be there.

Marching overland through the bush wouldn't do. Too slow. But a bomb dropped from wings at the right spot, Murphy thought, would scare these besieging head hunters to retreat. After that, one squad with a machine gun should be sufficient.

Murphy now pressed his automatic against Palawan and made the man lie face down on the rug. With silk cords from the draperies he secured the Moro hand and foot, then propped him to a sitting posture against the wall.

Next the marine officer wrangled a heavy cabinet against the barred window. This darkened the room, so he lighted a candle. Gloom would suit better than a glare, he thought. Then he sat down with the gun on his knees.

"I'm the doctor, you're the patient," he said to Palawan.

The Malay gave him a faintly derisive smile. Something up his sleeve, thought Murphy. And why was there no chatter from natives outside? Murphy went to the window, moved the barricade slightly and peered out. Nothing moved out there. There was no sound. The rest of the house, too, was breathless.

The place should, he reasoned, be surrounded by a cordon of savages. Had Palawan, giving instructions in Malay to Tawi, sent them chasing after the girl? But how, once she was on wings, could they hope to catch her?

"You get it first, remember," he warned Palawan.

Palawan closed his eyes. The faint derision was still on his face.

Minutes dragged by for an hour. Then, at five o'clock, Murphy crossed to the radio. He clicked a knob, finding that the instrument was already tuned in on Zamboanga. A dull program of recordings filled the room. A stringed orchestra.

The volume was none too strong. Half spent storage batteries, Murphy thought. Virginia would hardly be there yet. To save the batteries he tuned out until five-thirty.

At five-thirty he tried again. The voice he wanted to hear was Virginia's. Instead he heard Sergeant Richter of his own platoon. It was the local talent half hour, this time, put on each week by the Copra Club. Richter was singing throatily.

Murphy wanted to choke him. Richter was always going in for ballads of doleful sentiment, usually of Spanish War vintage. Murphy, with growing impatience, heard now:

"One kissed a ringlet of coal black hair,
One kissed a lock of brown!
Bidding farewell to the Stars and Stripes
Just as the sun went down!"

"Get the hook!" growled Murphy. He shut the dial off with a snap.

After waiting five minutes, he tried again. The volume was weaker. Again Murphy wanted to tune out and save batteries, but didn't, because any moment now Virginia might come rushing to the microphone. Surely she'd be there by six.

But six o'clock brought only more recordings in an even weaker volume. Murphy crossed fretfully to the cabinet and poured himself cognac. She might have missed her course a little, he thought. She could easily do that, flying a strange plane without an observer. She couldn't miss tide water, though. Plenty of villages along the coast, all governed by upright Filipino officials. Chances were she'd land at the first tide water lagoon she sighted and give the alarm from there.

In which case it would take another hour or two for the word to reach Zamboanga.

Murphy glanced toward Palawan. The Malay was still smiling. Why? And what had become of Tawi's crew, outside? Murphy peered from the window. It was dark now. Not a sound or glimmer came from the bush.

He turned the radio off and waited until seven. When he tried again at seven, the instrument gave only a few static squeaks and then went dead. Murphy could coax nothing more from it. He stood biting his lip. No way for him to find out, now, whether or not she arrived.

He took a stance before Palawan and his eyes probed the man fiercely. Palawan, he thought, was laughing at him. But he couldn't quite bring himself to shoot the man, in cold blood, simply because storage batteries had gone dead. Nothing to do but stand by—
ble. Pallawan was a gambler
were the marines.

Long taut moments brought
Murphy sat down, weighing each of them, hoping against hope that Virginia was safe at Zamboanga.

The vigil, he could see, was treating Palawan more kindly than himself. The Malay was relaxed. In a little while Murphy saw that he was sleeping. He, Murphy, couldn't sleep. The bush was full of Moros. Not until relief came could he dare close an eye. The redness of his eyes stared back at him from a mirror. Deep lines in his face told him how desperately he needed rest.

Tough as he was, the strain of these last days and nights had taken heavy toll on Murphy. There'd been those cramped hours spent stowed away in the Navy plane's fuselage. A night in the bush with rain pelting him. Two more nights prowling through thickets for the *Swallow!* Days of sleepless suspense in the girl's room. And now this deadly vigil with Palawan. It was getting him down, Murphy thought. Ultimate collapse was certain, unless relief came soon from the marines.

All night he sat there, fighting weariness. Ears strained for an onrush from without. Eyes warily on Palawan, whose sleeping mocked him.

Morning came. Jolo Palawan opened his eyes. They fastened with a glint of elation upon Murphy's haggard face.

"Don't pay yourself any dividends!" Murphy said.

He went to the cabinet and poured himself more cognac. Then, to keep awake, he began pacing the room.

The house was still silent. So was the bush outside. Nothing but his own growing fatigue menaced Murphy. When he sat down, he caught himself drowsing.

Slyly Palawan watched him, waiting for his collapse, confident in his heart that Virginia could not have reached Zamboanga.

VIRGINIA ran stumbling through the bush. Vines ripped her. Saplings slapped her face and thorns lacerated. Mosquitos swarmed in clouds, and from every side came the stench of damp smells.

Nightmares of last night, as she had cowered in the slough-stranded wreck of the *Swallow,* still flogged her. Yet daylight had brought worse. A fleet of canoes in the distance, speeding toward her across the lake. Then flight—a blind, hopeless dash through swamp and bush.

Now she could keep face from the morning sun, and so know she was headed west toward Zamboanga. Beyond that she was lost in darkest, deepest Mindanao.

Bursts of terror in her heart made her keep on, fighting the bush, beating through it, splashing its mires until her skirt was a plaster of drenched rags.

She came, finally, to a faint trail. Where it led made no difference, now. She took it and the trail broadened. It joined a road of deep ruts, as though carabao carts had passed here. Because it lay at right angles to the sun, Virginia looked both ways dubiously.

Which way to go? She chose the left and ran until a root tripped her. This time she lay there, face down, sobbing.

When a weird chanting came from far down the trail, she stood up to dash on. All day she had been expecting them to catch her—those Moros she had seen coming in *prahus.* They *would* catch her now. She ran frantically. They were closer, gaining in spite of her best effort. She stopped, turned about with hands clenched and faced defiantly toward the distant, chanting voices.

Then, with a shock, she became aware that the song was in English.

Oh the monkeys have no tails in Zamboanga;
The chimpanzees have fleas
Away up in the trees;
But the monkeys have no tails in Zamboanga.

Tramp—tramp—they came marching around a bend of the road. A platoon of marines, led by Roscoe Haliburton.

Virginia screamed at them once, then sank in a forlorn huddle on the trail.

Haliburton found her in hysteria. His men crowded about. Strong hands picked her up, placed her gently on moss at the base of a banyan.

"We've been two days on the way," Haliburton said. "Guess we look like it, don't we?"

The men were almost as muddy and scratched as Virginia.

She told them sketchily about Murphy and Palawan.

"I see," Haliburton said shrewdly. "That's why Palawan got the wind up yesterday, and wanted to move you out. Guess he got a tip by radio we'd started."

"Started where?" she asked.

"Out looking for that wild Irishman, Murphy. Talked the major into it, when Murph was reported A.W.O.L."

She looked up at the sun's angle, then pointed east.

"I think," she said, "the lake is that way."

They looked that way. And from it came a spear. No enemy was visible, but the spear came singing toward them and sank to its barb in a palm by Haliburton. Then more spears came from the bush. And with them came savage yells.

"Open order!" bawled Haliburton. "Fire at will!"

He pulled Virginia into the bush, then

whipped up his Enfield. She felt the blast as it blazed close to her cheek. Already the platoon was spread out, in open order, firing.

MURPHY, locked in the den with Palawan, kept swinging his arms and slapping muscles. He tried talking to Palawan, but the Malay wouldn't answer. The marine officer poured water from a carafe into his cupped hands, bathing his eyes with it. He wound the spring of a phonograph and put on the noisiest record he could find.

Even then he caught himself nodding.

Palawan watched him patiently. The white man, he saw, was dead on his feet. In a little while, one hour, two hours—

When Murphy *did* succumb to drowsiness, the Malay still waited to make sure. Then he stood up. His ankles were bound, but he managed to hobble until his back was against a barong on the wall.

He made friction with the cords at his wrists until the barong's blade severed them. Speedily Palawan released his ankles. Then he took possession of Murphy's gun.

He kicked Murphy awake and the marine officer looked up to find the point of Palawan's blade at his chest. Palawan stood there like a swarthy pirate, gun in one hand and barong in the other.

"This rug from China," Palawan said softly, "is a thing I cherish. So let us go to some quiet place in the bush." His blade pricked Murphy and Murphy stood up, blinking.

He was marched out, the barong touching the small of his back.

On the front veranda, both captor and captive came to a shocked halt. They saw a full platoon of marines on the lawn, in double rank, standing stiffly at attention. Enfields were at right shoulder, eyes straight ahead, not a muscle moving. Haliburton, in command, stood three paces front and center.

Sight of them staggered Palawan. Then Murphy came to life, swung around quickly and drove a hard smashing right into the Malay's face. Palawan buckled to a heap on the top step and lay still there.

Then Virginia appeared from nowhere and came running to Murphy. She came to him like a tired, bruised child, her face streaked with tears. Murphy looked down at her, his arms aching to hold her.

"About—face!" bawled Haliburton.

With snappy precision, and still at attention, the platoon of marines did an about-face.

No less snappily, Haliburton faced away with them. They stood all with their backs to the steps.

"Never mind the guard!" shouted Haliburton.

And Murphy, with a happy grin, took Virginia in his arms.

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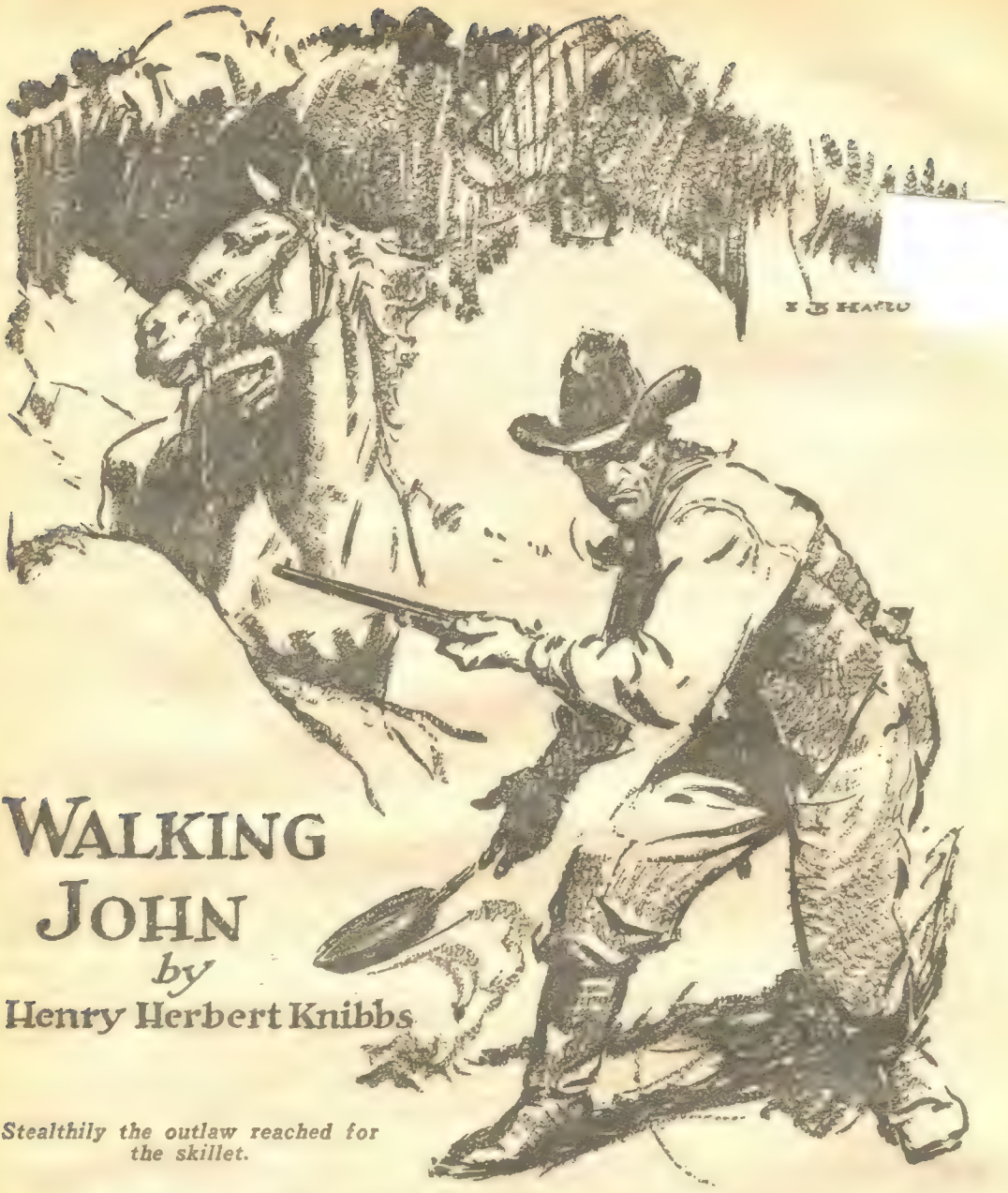

WALKING JOHN

by

Henry Herbert Knibbs

Stealthily the outlaw reached for the skillet.

BORDEN had been in Arizona but little over a year. He had come from the East. He had settled in the Mebbyso district, not alone because he liked the mining partners, Young Hardesty and Bedrock, but because it agorded him personal freedom and a chance to recover his health. Frequently he strolled over to the mine to visit with the partners. This morning, however, Borden didn't stroll. He made fast time.

Arriving at the tail end of a brisk July shower, he was greeted heartily. And how were things going at the homestead?

"Fast," replied Borden. "My horse, provisions, rifle, and ammunition have disappeared. The house is still there, which is something."

"Somebody steal Walking John? When did it happen?"

"This morning, I walked over to Grant to get a few things. When I got back

about ten, I found that somebody had cleaned me out."

For some reason or other Young Hardesty was grinning. Borden thought it no time for humor. "Seems to amuse you, Joe."

"Think I ain't takin' it serious?" Young Hardesty eyed Borden contemplatively. "Tell you what I'll do. I'll trade you that Walkin' John horse for your thirty-thirty Winchester."

"That's mighty generous of you. Is he here?"

"He ain't here. And you say your rifle's gone. But I'm willing to trade."

"You two are conspiring to bemuddle me."

"Mebby," chuckled Bedrock. "But suppose Joe conspires his pony and some grub and his old Sharp's blunderbuss, and you conspire to take up a hole in your belt and trot along with him. You might bemuddle the man that lifted your stuff."

"With the chance of gettin' good and wet," said Young Hardesty. "Anyhow a little rain ought to make the job easier."

Borden wanted to know why.

Bedrock knocked the ashes from his pipe. "Joe knows that a man who would steal your grub, your gun and your horse all at once, is like to hole up when it rains. A regular horse thief would keep goin', rain or no rain. It looks like it was some renegade Apache, or some low-down white that did the job."

Young Hardesty fetched his horse, saddled him, tied some food back of the cantle, rolled his slicker; shoving the Sharp's in the scabbard, he signified that he was ready. Borden borrowed a slicker and a short length of cord to belt it up with when walking.

When they paused on the mountainside for a brief rest Borden asked Young Hardesty why they were traveling straight for The Other Valley r
taking up the tracks at the l

"If the fella that stole y
had headed east into the Badla
'a' seen him on your way back from Grant. If he'd headed south you'd 'a' seen him on your way back from Grant. If he'd headed south you'd 'a' met him. If he struck north he would 'a' passed the mine and we'd seen him. I'm figurin' he took to the brush.

"Lesson number one," said Borden.

"Number two bein' to take it easy. A coyote don't run so far unless he knows you're tight after him." There was a twinkle in Young Hardesty's dark eyes. "Figure it out yourself. You set out after deer, or bear, mebby. Even a silvertip is more scared, when folks are gunnin' for him, than the folks themselves. He'll run if he gets a chance. What I mean, when you're trackin' game you don't go hell-wallopin' through the brush. You take it easy, and figure out its habits, and the weather. Most game will act different when it's hot and dry than when the rain is beatin' down. Humans act about the same."

ARRIVING at the crest of the range, Borden gazed intently down into the wide valley as if he expected to behold the purloiner of his horse and rifle making tracks for the distant horizon. Young Hardesty readjusted his saddle which had slipped back on the up-hill pull. When they again set out they followed south along the ridge, keeping within the timber. Borden would have dropped directly down into the valley, and tried to pick up the tracks of the unknown in the sand of the river bottom. As they plodded quietly along, he saw the wisdom of Young Hardesty's maneuver. Suspecting that he might be followed, the thief would most certainly watch his back trail. He would pay less attention to the country on either side of him.

As they came to the western edge of Borden's homestead, which ran from the crest down to the desert, Young Hardesty dismounted. Crossing the ridge were the tracks of Borden's horse, Walking John.

Borden nodded.

"But I have often crossed here," he declared.

"Always ride straight across?"

"Yes."

"This fella pulled the grade, stopped, turned his horse halfway round and sized up the country behind him. Then he moseyed on. If he didn't strike south when he hit the river bottom yonder, most likely he headed up into the timber." Young Hardesty squatted and curled a cigarette. Borden studied the tracks, wondering how anyone could read so much with such scant evidence. "Well, we at least found the tracks," he said, walking back and forth restlessly.

"That yella slicker of yours is as good as a flag. If you'd set still a spell—say, did you do any trackin' around your cabin?"

"No. I was too surprised."

"Just lit out like your shirttail was afire, eh?"

"See here, Joe, I'm no Daniel Boone. I just took one look round; ca
and laid the cards on the tabl

"Well, we're playin', ain't

They continued along th
right angles to the course the [illegible] had taken. Near the southern entrance to The Other Valley, where the range broke down into ridges, they swung west into a vast reach of brush and timberland through which they could travel without being seen from the farther slope.

They had been going about two hours when Young Hardesty reined up, dismounted, and told Borden to climb into the saddle.

As they journeyed on, Young Hardesty told Borden that the country they were heading for was known as Burnt River Valley, a wide and shallow expanse of rock ridges, brush and sand. It was uninhabited—there was not even enough grazing to keep a goat alive. It was treacherous country to ride, especially at night. Rain from the hills had gutted it with sharp-banked arroyos that whipsawed here and there, their edges so frequently undercut by water that they would cave in if a fellow happened to ride too close.

"The kind of country that I'd take to if I stole a horse, or shot somebody," said Young Hardesty.

"Didn't we come a long way round?"

"We sure did."

"If I had been alone, I think I should have followed Walking John's tracks down into The Other Valley," declared Borden.

"And mebby run into a slug fired by somebody that was expectin' you to do just that thing."

"Think so?"

"A fella makin' his getaway will shoot quicker at somebody comin' from behind than he will at somebody comin' towards him."

"Do you think the man we're after is an out-and-out desperado?"

"I dunno." Young Hardesty made no further comment. But ever since leaving the mine he had been speculating as to the possible identity of the thief. Few people traveled that desert region. The few settlers in Grant and its vicinity were well known. None of them would be likely to steal a man's gun and his grub, to say nothing of his horse. Yet the thief knew the country. He had headed straight for the safest hideout within a radius of fifty miles. By a process of elimination Young Hardesty narrowed down the possibilities to some chance stranger going through, or someone the peace officers were after. But there hadn't been a gun fight in Bowdry for quite a while. No word had been passed along that a fugitive was ranging the country. The only recent killing on record was the murder of Old Man Jepson by his partner, Butch Wade. Young Hardesty shrugged. So far as he knew Wade was in jail, awaiting trial.

YOUNG HARDESTY headed west through the shadowy timberlands, following no track, no trail, simply plodding along at a pace which to Borden seemed

desperately slow. A mean drizzle of rain darkened the air. Borden found the stirrups uncomfortably short. After an hour of steady going he dismounted and stretched his legs.

"Knowed a fella once that rode with his stirrups short on purpose," said Young Hardesty.

"A tenderfoot?"

"Kind of. But the trouble was mostly his head. He rode that way so he could rest his chin on his knees when he was thinkin' hard. One time somebody stole his horse and gun. The fella was thinkin' so hard how to catch the thief, that he rode plumb past him. Didn't even hear him say good mornin'."

"I won't kill you now," said Borden. "I'll wait till we get back to the mine."

"You could get Bedrock to help bury me. You ain't any too handy with a shovel."

"Or at trailing on horseback," said Borden. "But believe me, Joe, I'm hell in a hack."

"Joe," said Borden unexpectedly, "would you have risked your neck, if the man had simply taken the rifle and food, and not Walking John?"

"Don't know as I'd take a chance just for the gun. But stealin' a horse kind of gets under my hide."

"For once I agree with you. I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for Walking John."

"I would, mighty quick."

"If he suited you, and you liked him, made a regular partner of him?"

"Sure! I could pick up five or six top horses for that money. Besides, a fella that would pay a thousand for a horse, most like would use him good."

Their slickers glistened with rain. Tiny beads of moisture silvered the tail hairs of the pony. The dull gray light in the timberlands, the dead monotony of pushing on, mile after mile, with no visible assurance that they were getting anywhere, dulled Borden's first enthusiasm. Heretofore he had been keen to discover the tracks of his stolen horse. Now he didn't even look for them. Young Hardesty, on foot, plugged steadily along, saying nothing. Borden followed mechanically. He was hardly aware that they had changed their course, probably because the pony, Shingles, followed Young Hardesty like a dog.

IT WAS long past noon. Young Hardesty was now traveling more slowly, picking a careful way round this giant spruce or that upthrust rock. Finally they came to a grassy opening rounded by heavy timber. Young Hardesty pointed toward the ground, "He rode straight through. But I reckon we'll stick to the brush."

Ahead of them in the soft earth were clean, round hoofprints. Borden felt a thrill of expectation. Somewhere beyond, Walking John was either plodding along under a strange rider, or stake-roped and standing in some arroyo, probably wondering why he was there—if horses did that sort of thing. Borden liked to believe that they did.

Young Hardesty seemed to take it for granted the town man had been aware of the tracks right along.

"John was travelin' right smart across that meadow," he said as they again headed into the brush. "You can tell by his scatterin's."

"Then he must be a long way ahead."

"Oh, I dunno. The fella that's got him knows this country. We come jigsaw. He hit straight for Burnt River Valley. I figure if he was hard up enough to steal your grub, he'll just naturally camp and feed up. Then, most like, he'll take a sleep. How about that bet now?"

"I'm not backing down."

"Not forgettin'," said Young Hardesty, "that he's likely to be a mighty ornery stakeholder."

His hat pulled down, Young H[illegible] again headed into the rain, wh[illegible] a mere drizzle had become [illegible] drumbeat. Huddled against the [illegible] sional gusts which rattled his slicker like

shot on a tin roof, Borden followed on the pony. Bucking such weather, with the thin possibility that they would overtake the thief in Burnt River Valley, began to seem as futile as beating the air with a club. Yet ahead of them the fresh tracks wound on and on.

Borden knew that the tracks would be pretty well washed out by they reached Burnt River Val could they trail the thief then? keep going, or hole up in some [illegible] shelter? What did he look like? Was he some down-and-out cowhand, or was he a regular bad one? Would he fight, or hand over the plunder and beg for leniency? It would be a kind of washout if he crawled, after all they had gone through to get him. Yet, disgruntled as he was, Borden realized that they hadn't gone through anything yet, except rough weather. Damn the rain! Why couldn't the thief have done his stealing in the dry season? Tired of communing with himself, Borden asked Young Hardesty what he was thinking about.

Young Hardesty grinned through the rain on his face. "Nothin', except a pot of coffee as big as a wash tub."

When they reached the edge of the timber, Borden dismounted and Young Hardesty took the pony. Beyond them slanted a gray wall of rain, floored darkly by wet sand and shimmering rock. This was Burnt River Valley.

While he had been riding, Borden's slicker had made a sort of tent which held the heat of the horse. Now he felt chilled. The Eastern doctor had told him to take plenty of light exercise, eat sensibly, spend all the time he could out of doors, but above all, keep dry and warm. Borden smiled to himself. In spite of the present chill and hardship he had never felt better in his life.

DRIVEN by a sharp wind, the rain beat slantwise on the sand, dancing up in a silver mist. There was no sign of man or horse in that wide reach of sand and rock. Yet Young Hardesty kept on. During the next hour the gray light grew thinner. Finally the massed clouds broke and ran tumbling across patches of blue sky. The low sun shot dazzling shafts across cloudy islands of gold, of crimson, and turquoise. Borden's face glistened with reflected light.

"Joe!" he said, gesturing toward the sunset.

A few feet beyond them ran the clay colored rim of an arroyo, its edge ragged and sheer, dropping to a boulder-strewn bottom dotted with glistening pools. It was rather sudden and amazing.

"That's one of 'em," said Young Hardesty. "You kind of want to watch where you're goin'."

"But the sunset. It's magnificent!"

"Sure is—for anybody watchin' his backtrail to see if somebody is after him."

Young Hardesty rode along the arroyo until, finding a break, he put his pony down. Gingerly Borden followed, wishing that he could, like the pony, brace his front feet, shoot his hind legs ahead, sit down and slide.

In the comparative shelter of an undercut bank they halted. They ate cold meat and cold biscuits. As darkness settled down Borden began to feel drowsy. Never, since coming to Arizona, had he put in such a hard day. And what had it amounted to? They were miles from the Mebbyso district, had mighty little food with them, nor was there any grazing for the pony.

The only visible evidence that they were on the right track had now been washed out by the heavy rain. Perhaps the thief had kept going in spite of the storm.

"See you in the morning," said Borden drowsily as Young Hardesty curled up in his slicker to catch a little sleep. Burnt River Valley! Burnt biscuits!

Several hours later, while Borden was dreaming of hot food cooked over an open fire, Young Hardesty awakened him. "Take it easy, Bill. When you get

the fog out of your eyes, see if you notice anything."

That brought Borden sharply awake. Burnt River Valley. Yesterday's journey. Breakfast. "What time is it, Joe?"

"It'll be light in a couple of hours."

Borden rose and stretched. He paused with his arms aloft. "Am I still dreaming or do I smell wood smoke?"

"Thought you might get it," said Young Hardesty. "I wasn't too dam' sure, at first. But now that you get it. . ."

Young Hardesty told Borden that if they could smell smoke down in the arroyo, which was winding, wide and deep, the fire it came from could not be on the flat country above. Smoke from up there would drift east to the timberlands. It wouldn't seek a lower level, especially with a fresh breeze blowing.

"Do you think our man is somewhere up this arroyo?"

"Somebody is up there. But he ain't our man yet."

Stiffly they climbed to the upper level, followed along the arroyo's rim, keeping a sharp lookout for a glint of firelight. Again it was a case of moving along a blind trail, with no objective in sight, no track to follow, no certainty that they would find the man they sought. They traveled for about half an hour when Young Hardesty stopped. Borden held the pony. Young Hardesty crept to the rim. Perhaps five minutes passed before he returned. They moved farther out onto the flats.

"He's there," declared Young Hardesty. "I was figurin' he was just some chuck line rider, mebby. But he ain't."

"And Walking John?"

"Shucks, he's all right! The fella's got a little stick fire goin'. He's boilin' some coffee."

"I can smell it."

"He's wolfin' down some grub, right now."

"It ought to be a good time to interview him."

"Listen, Bill. That fella down there ain't no Christmas present."

"Know him?"

"Not any. But I've seen him in Bowdry plenty—afore he murdered his pardner in the Blue Hills. They caught him, but he must 'a' broke jail. It's Butch Wade. He's holed up under the cut bank on this side," Young Hardesty whispered. "I could see him plain. He's settin' with the rifle across his [illegible] he's got Walking John right c[illegible] can make a quick getaway."

In spite of himself Borden began to tremble. He had pictured the thief as some desert tramp, hungry, broke and desperate. He hadn't expected to run into an out-and-out killer.

"How are we going to handle the job?" he asked.

Young Hardesty himself had been doing some thinking about that. In stalking the outlaw, two were apt to make more noise than one. Moreover, while Young Hardesty didn't underestimate the risk, for he knew that Butch Wade would shoot at the first crackle of a twig, Young Joe still looked upon the job in hand as a bet. He had jokingly bragged that he would recover Walking John and trade him for the rifle. Now it was up to him to make good.

"You set here a spell," he said. "I'm goin' up near the head of the arroyo and work down. He won't be expectin' company from that direction."

"Be careful, Joe."

"Hell! Don't you go cantelopin' off with the idea that I'm takin' any chances with that bird." Leaving his pony with Borden, Young Hardesty slipped away into the darkness.

BORDEN shivered in the chill air. He could smell wood smoke, coffee, bacon, and the clean, fresh odor of wet greasewood. Although too far back from the arroyo to hear any sound the outlaw might make, Borden imagined he could hear an occasional stealthy movement. Shingles, the pony, stood with dropped reins, head low, tired, undoubtedly hungry, yet wonderfully patient. Borden thought of his own horse, Walking John, another well-trained animal. But somehow Borden thought of him as back in the homestead corral, not saddled and standing alongside the outlaw.

Each moment he expected to hear a shot—perhaps several shots. As Young Joe had said, trailing a man wasn't an open and shut game. Neither was capturing him. A fellow had to do some guessing. What if the man down there got the best of Young Hardesty? Borden himself was unarmed. He felt helpless, useless. He was letting Young Hardesty take all the risk.

Unable to stand that uncertainty any longer, Borden uncoiled Shingles' neck rope, tied him to a heavy clump of brush, and cautiously made his way to the arroyo's rim.

He lay on his belly and gazed down. Almost directly below him a man sat huddled over a tiny fire. He had a rifle across his legs. On his right stood Walking John, firelight glinting on the polished leather of the saddle. As he surveyed each detail of the outlaw's meager camp, Borden thought he heard a faint sound from the opposite bank. The man below also heard it, was gazing out into the darkness.

Borden shook with excitement. Stealthily the outlaw reached for the skillet, scooped up some sand to put out the fire. As stealthily as he had picked it up, he set the skillet down. Slowly he backed away, hunching along, his legs bent under him. All the while he was gazing intently at the opposite bank. Borden himself thought he saw a movement in the distant shadows. Was Young Hardesty over there? The man below was raising the rifle, so slowly that Borden could hardly see his arms move.

Borden got to his knees, felt for a rock to throw. He found none. The man below might have discovered Young Hardesty before Young Hardesty was aware of it. Borden was about to yell to the outlaw to distract his attention, when he heard the hammer of the rifle cluck softly back. With a catch in his breath Borden rose and leaped out into space.

Borden gasped as he dropped through the air. He landed squarely on top of the crouching man below. Confused by the shock, the dim light, the suddenness of it all, he was dimly aware that a shot had been fired just as he jumped. He grappled with the man under him, de-

termined to hang onto him till Young Hardesty came. But Borden's hands seemed to be clutching nothing but emptiness. He felt queer. He tried to get to his feet. What had happened? Had he been hit by the shot he had heard? Realizing that he was losing consciousness, he made a supreme effort to overcome the blackness that was surrounding him. He tried to call out, but his voice died in his throat. The jolt of the fall, excitement, and fatigue were too much for him. He slumped down, fainted across the unresisting body beside the ashes of the dying fire.

THE sun was shining, and a pleasantly cool breeze was drying the rain-soaked earth when Borden came to. He saw the legs of a horse, the legs of another horse, the red bank of the arroyo, smooth rounded boulders shimmering in the sunlight.

The horses were there—Walking John and the pony Shingles. Both were unsaddled. Bent over a small heap of smoking roots and twigs, Young Hardesty was cussing complacently and fanning it with his hat. Borden threw back the slicker which covered him. "Gosh, I'm stiff! Morning, Joe. Where is he?"

"Walking John? Right over yonder."

"I mean the fellow that stole him."

"How you feelin'?" said Young Hardesty.

"I'm all right. I—" Borden stood up. "Phew! My leg!" He limped over to Young Hardesty, gazed up at the rim of the arroyo. "Quite a jump! What happened?"

"That's what I was goin' to ask you. Anyhow, it was plenty."

"Did I knock him out?"

Young Hardesty frowned. "Listen, Bill. I'm tryin' to nurse this here fire along so we can make some coffee." There was a set look on his face, a look Borden knew. Young Joe didn't want to talk. He did, however, gesture brusquely toward his own slicker which lay rumpled on the sand. At first Borden didn't catch the significance. "Did he get away?"

"Not any."

Borden limped over to the slicker, lifted its edge.

Deep-set, dead eyes stared up at him from a dark face, hollow cheeked, rough with a stubbly beard. But worse than that was the frozen grin on the thin-lipped mouth.

"God!" breathed Borden. "I killed him!"

No wonder Young Hardesty didn't want to talk. Trailing the man, speculating on the outcome, thought Borden, was one thing. Looking at his ghastly, rigid, grinning up a was quite a different matter. sick to his stomach.

Young Hardesty now had the fire going, Borden limped down the arroyo, absent-mindedly noting a recent cave-in along the far bank. He laid down and drank from a pool. He rose, brushed his eyes as if trying to wipe away the vision of the dead outlaw's face.

"Come and get it," called Young Hardesty.

Borden tramped back to the fire. "I didn't know it would be like this, Joe."

"Packin' him out will be the worst. One of us has got to walk."

Didn't Young Hardesty have any feelings at all? Borden swallowed some coffee and stared round at the camp.

"I must have been out a long time," he said finally.

Young Hardesty nodded casually. "First, I thought you was out for keeps. Then I thought mebby you broke your leg or somethin'. But your breathin' was all right, so I just let you lay."

"Have we got to take the body out?"

"Nope. Plenty of rocks and sand here. But I'm takin' it."

"I hate to think that I killed him."

Young Hardesty got up, his face dark, lowering. "Come here!"

Borden followed him to the spot where the dead man lay. Young Joe whipped

the slicker clear back, disclosing the dead man's chest. Borden turned away. The heavy slug from Young Hardesty's Sharp's had drilled him through the heart.

"So that was it," said Borden.

"That was it."

Somehow, Borden felt relieved. He hadn't actually killed the man. But there was Young Hardesty, grim, silent, brooding.

"I got you into this," said Borden hesitatingly.

"You better saddle Walking John. We'll be pullin' our freight right soon."

THEY trailed down the arroyo in the morning sun, Young Hardesty leading Shingles with the body roped across the saddle.

Borden had recovered his horse and rifle, but somehow he didn't feel any happier. He felt he had paid a pretty high price—a man's life. Of course folks would say it was a good thing that Butch Wade was dead. Hadn't he murdered his partner in cold blood? So they would talk. But they hadn't had a hand in killing the outlaw.

"Butch Wade." Borden had seen the name somewhere. Now he remembered. In the Bowdry postoffice, a bill describing the outlaw, and offering a thousand dollars reward for his capture, dead or alive. Borden hated to think that that was why Young Hardesty was taking the body out.

Although it was Young Hardesty who had actually killed Wade, Borden felt equally responsible for the outlaw's death. He knew when he made the wild jump to stop Wade from shooting Young Hardesty, that more than likely the outcome would be tragedy—that Wade would either kill or be killed. Wade had already forfeited his life, but to the community, not to an individual. Had he been captured and executed in the regular process of law, it would have been quite a different matter. Borden felt as if he were balancing on the thin edge between theory and practice. In theory the killing was entirely justifiable. In practice it was a rotten business.

They nooned and rested the horses down in the timberlands west of The Other Valley. Young Hardesty talked about Borden's jump—told the town man he had been a fool to take that chance.

"I might of got you instead of him, when I shot," said Young Hardesty. "I was watchin' him, goin' to tell him to put 'em up and come out. Then you jumped. It all come so dam' sudden—I just cut loose."

Borden nodded. "If I hadn raise his rifle—and he was tal ful bead on *something*—I wou jumped."

Young Hardesty shrugged. "And if you hadn't, mebby he'd 'a' got me first."

"Joe—" a thin smile touched Borden's lips—"we're simply kidding ourselves." Borden got up and led the horse bearing the body behind a clump of firs. "I simply can't talk freely with that thing near me," he said as he came back. "I feel as if it is listening. By the way, Joe, the thirty-thirty is yours."

"All right."

"I think I have seen a notice of reward for this man Wade. One thousand dollars, dead or alive. That's a tempting sum."

"For some folks."

"We're taking the body out, then. Dead meat at so much a pound."

Young Hardesty frowned. "You got any idea we didn't earn it?"

"That's not the point. Damned if I'll have anything to do with such a ghastly business."

"All right. I'm takin' him out, just the same."

Borden had expected Young Hardesty to say that. The town man took another tack. "Joe, we've been friends for two years, darned good friends. I simply can't stomach it to think you're taking

the body out to get that thousand. Why, I'd rather give you that amount myself. In fact I will, if—"

"If I'll roll some rocks over the body and leave it here? What do you think Sheriff Orcutt would say to that? He'd say, 'That's fine, Joe. We'll go take a look. But we'll keep you here till we get all straight on the deal'."

"I could give evidence."

"Sure. And they'd bury it, and a dam' sight more, to get that thousand."

For a moment Borden studied his companion's intense face. "I think I understand you."

"If you did, you wouldn't offered to pay me the thousand yourself. You kind of slipped, there. It would be blood money just the same. Recollect I made a bet of gettin' your horse back? Well, I figured it would be a long haul and plenty misery whether we landed the fella or didn't land him. It don't help any to set out on a job like that with your mouth pulled down."

"I appreciate that."

"I reckon you was figurin' it was just a crazy bet, with the fella that had your horse holdin' the long end of it."

"I was."

"So was I. But when we caught up with Wade and put him out, I was all done with that bet. You said, just recent, that the thirty-thirty carbine now was mine."

"Yes."

"Well that don't sound so dam' good to me. What the hell do I care for your thirty-thirty, or that blood money? I bumped Wade off because I had to, not because he stole your cayuse. Luck throwed that job at me and I couldn't dodge. I'm takin' Wade in so as to finish the job clean. They ain't no money made that could pay me for killin' him."

"I'm mighty glad. I thought—"

"You got me wrong. You figured I was takin' him in to get the reward. I forgot they was a reward until you started to talk about it."

"I made a mistake."

Young Hardesty's face cleared. But he was not the kind to shake hands and openly call the misunderstanding off. Borden had apologized. That called for an equally graceful gesture.

Young Hardesty led his horse up to Borden. Taking Borden's thirty-thirty from Walking John's saddle, Young Hardesty shoved it into the empty boot on his own pony.

"Fits pretty good," he said casually. "Mind packin' my old Sharp's till we get to camp?"

After all that had happened, all that had been said, Young Hardesty's acceptance of the thirty-thirty spoke more eloquently than words.

Had it not been for the grim burden roped in Young Hardesty's slicker, Borden could have whistled as he rode. Never before had he realized how much their friendship meant—nor how much Young Hardesty meant to himself.

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He stood directly in the thing's path.

THE DEAD GO OVERSIDE

Third Part of Five

By ARTHUR D. HOWDEN SMITH

ABIJAH MAYO'S father had gone down with his ship, trapped on a lee shore under the guns of an English frigate during the War of 1812. Now, eight years afterward, Abijah was in command of a coasting schooner sailing to the Banks from Provincetown, and was highly rated by Cape Cod seafaring men.

But that was before he met Lucy Adams and her father, who commanded the *Sailor's Joy*. Captain Hiram Adams had taunted him: "Milk-and-water sailor! Keep away from Lucy. My gal ain't goin' to marry a Banker!"

And that very night 'Bijah had warned his uncle, "I'm going deep sea, on the first ship out of New Bedford—

even if she's a whaler and I [illegible] in the foc'sle!"

En route, 'Bijah intervene[illegible] tempted highway robbery, a[illegible] he saved proved to be Paul Da Souza, wealthy supercargo of the schooner *Diana*. Through him 'Bijah met her captain, Lion Stanford, and signed as second mate for a voyage to the west coast of Africa.

Hardly had the ship cleared port when 'Bijah learned that trouble lay ahead. Stanford, drunken and sullen, locked himself in his cabin, and in his drunken rages shouted hints of unspeakable crimes. And sang a song which gave the first inkling of the *Diana's* real mission:

We've rum in the cabin,
Black ivory in the hold,
Who wouldn't drink to fortune
And pledge the slaver bold?

Stunned and exhausted from piloting a strange ship down the coast, 'Bijah waited for his captain to come to his senses. Then, he told himself, there would have to be a reckoning. 'Bijah Mayo would be a lot of things, but he would never be a slaver.

As it happened, he might have spared himself useless vows. For Lion Stanford, whatever his weakness for women and liquor, was no man to stand for the slightest hint of malcontent. At the end of a stormy interview, 'Bijah realized that he was a slaver in spite of himself, and that any hostile move would mean death. But he privately resolved to escape at the earliest opportunity.

Then suddenly, off Cuba, Fate tied his hands more securely to the ship he hated. They sighted a derelict and saw a woman lashed to the mast. The derelict was the *Sailor's Joy*, decimated by scurvy. The girl was Lucy, the lone survivor. Stanford welcomed her civilly enough, but, remembering the songs he had heard Lion sing in his cabin, 'Bijah knew that he had a deadly rival for her.

Off Africa Stanford proved that he was a good commander, if a bad captain. Apparently trapped by a British frigate, he not only escaped but brought his pursuer to her doom on the rocks.

And so they came to the jungle country, with 'Bijah's desperation growing hourly. Outlawed now, with English sail ever set against them, their chances were fearfully slim of ever getting away.

'Bijah, watching that dread new land come out of the horizon, promised himself that come what may, he would get Lucy out of Stanford's hands, and take her back to Provincetown unhurt.

CHAPTER XI

FORT SAO SEBASTIAN

'BIJAH had no difficulty with the crew. It had been one thing for them to join in Stanford's song in the bright sunshine on the open deck. The delirium of successful combat had jolted them free for the moment from the superstitions which preyed on their simple minds. It was something else again for them to listen to his voice, pulsing from the cabin in alternate blasts of music, profanity and vituperation, always with an undertone of mockery that was inexpressibly suggestive of evil. He had only to begin one of his dialogues with the devil to reduce them to a state of abject terror amusingly at variance with their swaggering attitude an hour since. Not a man of them raised an objection when Lew rolled the rum barrel back into the galley.

But there were other sources of worry for 'Bijah. Night was coming on and he was in waters of which he was abysmally ignorant, a treacherous coast to leeward. Thanks to coaching from Da Souza and Black Barnaby, whom he summoned aft, he weathered the shoal successfully, and headed the schooner south, with a leadsman taking soundings at five minute intervals. But it didn't make him any more comfortable when they

told him that Dead Nigger Shoal was within a day's sail of the mouth of the Aimani—that meant tricky currents offshore and bars and reefs which probably shifted with every storm.

He did the best he could. He kept the crew busy to divert their minds from Stanford's ravings—two of them handled the leadline; others he posted on lookout duty; others he put to catching fish for their dinner. Black Barnaby was shamefacedly efficient. None of them was much the worse for the rum, as any ordinary crew must have been. Lucy he finally sent forward to the galley to escape the implications of Stanford's monologues, which were becoming increasingly obscene. She was cheerful, never whimpering, but he saw the shudders she was unable to control.

"I want to stay right here," she protested. "You might need me at the wheel. And anyhow I want to be with you."

"It's no place for a woman," 'Bijah answered. "He hasn't rightly begun yet. You go for'ard with Lew and Peletiah. He managed a grin. "Orders, Lucy dear. Captain Mayo speaking."

"Aye, aye, sir," she returned, smiling bravely. "I'm not really worried, 'Bijah, not with you in command."

Lew came aft a little later, with a plate of fried fish and hardtack and a mug of tea for him.

"That's a grand little lass o' yours, 'Bije'," he said. "Don't have her on your mind. I'm spinning her a round of tall yarns will set her yawning, and then I'll tuck her into my bunk and do sentry-go at the door. I conceive this will be a night we'll none of us sleep—leastways not you and me and Black Barnaby, eh, bosun?"

"I'm standin' by Mr. Mayo, 'ere," Barnaby answered sturdily. "A rare plucked un, 'e is, Lew."

"I wouldn't know what to do without the pair of you," 'Bijah said thankfully. "Give Barnaby half a mug of rum, Lew, He rates it."

DARKNESS came with a swoop, as if a curtain had been dropped from the vault of the sky. One minute the red disc of the sun was poised on the western horizon's rim. Then it was gone, leaving neither afterglow nor twilight. The air cooled, the breeze freshened and a great yellow moon rose up out of Africa, streaking its rays across the methodical surge of the swell, humbling the stars.

Da Souza, who was sitting on the cabin skylight, smoking a cigarro, made a little deprecatory sound with his tongue.

"Is anything wrong, Senhor?" 'Bijah asked.

The old man sighed.

"The moon," he said, "it is almost full. That means Sirosi, the wizard, will be holding the Moon Dance to smell out the sacrifices. And that is not pleasant to think of."

"What is the Moon Dance?" pressed 'Bijah.

"A rite of the poor heathen. The crocodile is their god. It is not pretty to look upon, that dance. I pray you may never witness it." He hesitated. "It is not good for our friend below. I could almost wish we were come a week later."

Stanford had been silent for some time, muttering to himself. Now, as if the moonglow had instilled the same idea in his mind, he burst forth ironically.

"Ah, Sirosi, you foul fiend! The devil must envy you your talents. How many women have you chosen this month? Well, I don't care how many. I'll take the pick of them from you, and if you don't like it I'll twist that turkey neck of yours."

He rambled on and on, but the vigor had gone out of his debauch. 'Bijah sensed that the edge had been drunk off it. Da Souza must have felt the same way, for he wrapped his cloak around him and tossed his cigarro into the water.

"I am going to lie down." he said. "If anything troubles you, pray arouse me."

"Won't you let me send Peletiah to

bring up a mattress?" suggested 'Bijah.

Da Souza smiled.

"A wooden deck is softer than a stone bench, and I have passed many a night of penance so, my son."

The last words held the lingering caress of a blessing. They moved 'Bijah strangely. After the old man had stretched himself out, and fallen instantly into a peaceful slumber, the young New Englander found himself staring down at the wrinkled mask pillowed on the deck-planking, each of its details etched clearly in the moonlight —the powerful jut of the nose, the firm set of the lips, the delicately carven jaw. No hint of failure in that face, nor of fear. Whatever the tragedies he had known, the mistakes or sins he had committed, Da Souza looked to the future with entire faith.

The schooner lunged southward. All night 'Bijah stood or sat by the wheel, the only noises the whispering of the wind, the creaking of her rigging, an occasional murmured order to the man at the wheel, the calling of the dep leadsmen forward, the patterin feet as the watch was chan rarely, a muffled echo from who seemed to be sleeping fitfu chair.

'Bijah made Black Barnaby lie down on the deck across from Da Souza, much to the bosun's disgust, although that didn't keep him from snoring lustily. Peletiah was curled up under a carronade amidships. Lucy was sleeping quietly, Lew reported at intervals—the cook was as wakeful as 'Bijah. Mr. Wells appeared on deck once, and 'Bijah sent his superior below with a curt: "Nothing for you to do. I'm in charge until the captain orders otherwise."

The dawn came as abruptly as the night, and there to port, more distinct than it had been the day before, was the loom of land. Through his glass 'Bijah could see the white belt of beach, the lush green of vegetation. The wind had become puffy, veering around the compass, and when it came off the land it brought with it a sickly sweet scent, cloying, faintly nauseating. 'Bijah sniffed dubiously, and Da Souza spoke behind him.

"The smell of the jungle, the smell of Africa. It will be a stench in our nostrils for weeks to come."

The supercargo glanced overside.

"Do you see how muddy the water is? We must be off the Aimani's mouth."

"I should have seen it," 'Bijah exclaimed self-reproachfully.

Da Souza laid a veined claw comfortingly on his shoulder.

"You have done well, my son. Be you not ashamed, you who have not closed your eyes and have been the guardian of all of us. But it is time that Captain Stanford came to himself. I will send him on deck."

THE schooner awoke to life. Lucy appeared from the galley, sleepy-eyed but rested, carrying a cup of steaming coffee for 'Bijah. And after an interval Stanford stepped from the cabin hatch, his features ravaged, but shaven and dressed in clean whites, his step springy with that uncanny resiliency at which 'Bijah never ceased to marvel. The man's vitality was unnatural. He seemed to draw strength from debauchery which must have destroyed other men.

"Morning, Miss Lucy," he said. And courteously enough, but with no suggestion of apology: "I'm afraid you didn't enjoy the night." He turned to 'Bijah. "A good job, young feller. Always knew you were a seaman. I'll take over." He squinted at the land, looked at the water, gauged the wind with a raised forefinger. "Don't know how you did it. Couldn't have done it better myself. We'll be off the bar in an hour."

"Call me, sir, if you want me," 'Bijah answered. "I took the liberty of sending Mr. Wells below when he came up to take the watch."

Stanford smiled at him—and it was

to be the last show of cordiality between them, although 'Bijah didn't know that.

"Glad you did. We'll let Mr. Wells have the dirty job of slinging up cargo and stowing the blacks."

'Bijah walked forward with Lucy. He wasn't sleepy, but she made him lie down on Lew's bunk in the galley, and though it was stuffy in the meagre cubicle, he preferred it to the confinement of the cabin, drenched with the fumes of rum and tobacco and the lingering aura of Stanford's perverse monologues. She sat beside him, holding his hand, Lew bustling about cheerily, and after they had promised to arouse him when the schooner entered the river he dozed off contentedly.

They let him sleep until nearly noon, however, because the *Diana* was obliged to lie off the bar awaiting the flood tide. It was stifling in the galley, little less so on deck, the humid air heav sickly sweet jungle smell. was drifting, rather than sa yellow corridor of water bo tangled walls of trees so thickly interwoven that it was impossible to see past the fronts of the twin barriers. Monkeys swung chattering in the topmost branches, but the birds that flitted overhead like winged jewels were voiceless. 'Bijah was conscious—and Lucy, too—of a feeling of oppression, of silent forces, inhuman, implacable, irresistible. Here, nature was master, man of little more significance than the monkeys in the trees or the huge crocodiles which slid off mudbanks as the schooner's bow-wave disturbed them.

"If ye was to ask me," Lew said critically, as he stood beside them, pipe in hand, "I'd say this here is a land all the world's deviltry come from. I allus wanted to see Afriky, but now I've seed it I don't care how long it will be before I see it ag'in."

The crew likewise felt the spell. They were more sullenly subdued than ever, and 'Bijah saw one of the Portygees cross himself, lips moving in prayer. Da Souza watched the river's panorama as if it contained for him some vision private to himself. Stanford alone was uninfluenced by the spell, his orders crisp and cool, his bearing casual.

Black Barnaby, ranging alongside 'Bijah, confided:

"Mortal fearsome, ain't it, Mr. Mayo? No country for white men—only Portygees 'd live in it. I wanted to tell 'ee—watch out for them crocs. If one gets 'ee not a nigger'd raise a hand to help 'ee, and if 'ee killed un we'd have all B'Goma Nandi's people down on us, and not a slave for sale, into the bargain. 'Ere the croc's a god, and men and wimmin and children ain't no more'n fodder for 'im."

Lucy shivered.

"How horrible," she exclaimed.

"Yes, and wot's more," Barnaby persisted, "don't 'ee let the little maid go ashore, if 'ee 'ave to kill the skipper to stop it, sir. Wot goes on in Sao Sebastian and B'Goma Nandi's town—" he spat overside—"I've seed things in my life, but this 'ere is too steep for me."

THE schooner drifted around a bend and opened a long stretch of cleared ground on the southern bank, spreading upstream from a low elevation crowned by a squat structure, its mud-gray parapets bristling with cannon, the gaudy flag of Portugal drooping from a staff. Beyond it were gardens, and a range of long, thatched-roofed buildings, and farther on the conical huts of what was evidently a native town.

"There's the hell-hole," said Barnaby. "Them's the barracoons by the gardens, most likely bustin' with niggers. And B'Goma Nandi's little private hell upstream. 'E fancies 'isself, B'Goma Nandi does, calls 'isself king. Meself, I'd rather be friends with a croc than with 'im. But there's no accountin' for 'ow people feel, as the man said wot took an 'atchet to 'is mother-in-law."

The flag atop of the fort was dipped, and a puff of smoke jetted from one of

the cannon. As the anchor splashed, a barge, with a canopy at the stern, put out from the shore, and drove athwart the current, urged by a dozen black oarsmen. Several sailors hooked a substantial ladder over the bulwarks. Peletiah, passing, remarked, with a wink:

"Never seed that before, did ye, Mr. Mayo? The cap'n had it made special for Senhor Da Costa, him bein' so fat. Wait 'til ye see the old—Ow, sir, I won't say it!"

The barge drew alongside the ladder, with a flourish of tossed oars, and two of the giant Negroes propped up an immense hogshead of a man in a greasy, gold-braided uniform, a man whose face resembled the snout of a pig, to the bristles on its jaws and the little, sharp eyes deeply embedded in layers of fat. He hailed Stanford in Portuguese, then perceived Lucy, tottered precariously in amazement and cried out in a jargon of English:

"Ho, ho, my fran', you 'ave brought one of zhose soo-lovely ladies you know 'ow to peeck! That is good. You weell not be salfish, eh? You weell share wizz poor ol' José Da Costa?" He kissed a dirty fist in Lucy's direction. "Senhora, I salute you. You shall be meestress of Sao Sebastian."

Lucy withdrew her head. Stanford frowned. It was Da Souza who answered the buffoon in a few harsh phrases of Portuguese. Da Costa looked crestfallen.

"Senhor Abbé," he protested, "you are too mooch the man of God. Blessed Saints, is there no more zhan sacrimental wine in your veins? But we weell talk more. I come!"

Supported by the Negroes, and to the accompaniment of a series of grunts and Portuguese oaths, he started to climb the ladder with a degree of strength, if not agility, which might not have been expected. 'Bijah hurried Lucy into the galley with Lew before he scrambled over the bulwarks, panting and sweating profusely.

"Soo!" he said with self-satisfaction, wiping his nose with one hand. "And where is the lady?"

Da Souza stepped up to him like a bantam challenging a boar. The supercargo's bearing was as authoriative as it had been with Stanford the previous afternoon. Again there was a harsh rattle of Portuguese. Da Costa lurched back a pace, and bumped into the bulwarks.

"On zhis sheep?" he exclaimed. "Wizz Capitan Stanfor'? I cannot make believe! But zhere ees time for everysing, Senhor Abbé. Now, we talk of what you breeeng me, and I tall you of the so fine cargo I 'ave in the barracoons for you. Sooch fine Negroes you 'ave never see'. Bucks like the bullock, wenches—ah, what a time you weell 'ave!" He grimaced slyly.

Stanford spoke for the first time, and his tone was like a lash.

"I don't like your talk, Da Costa."

Da Costa was blandly amazed.

"'Ow you 'ave changed! Do you, then, not come ashore wizz me?"

"Immediately. Bosun!" And as Black Barnaby rolled up: "Help the [illegible] into his barge."

Da Costa started to protest, [illegible] ford's eye and thought better [illegible] tering to himself in Portugues[illegible] Barnaby hoisted him to the top of the bulwarks—not any too gently.

"Are you ready, Paul?" Stanford asked Da Souza.

"Ready, Lion," the supercargo answered indulgently, as though he were speaking to a child.

Stanford spun on his heel and addressed 'Bijah.

"I'm taking you with us, Mr. Mayo. Throw some gear together, take a cutlass and two pistols and ammunition. You never know what may happen in this sort of place."

'Bijah cleared his throat.

"If you don't really require me, sir, I'd just as soon stay aboard. I suppose the cargo must be—"

"Mr. Wells can see to that, as I told you," rapped Stanford. The icy fire rekindled in his blue eyes.

"As a matter of fact, I may require your services. I want a white man with me I can rely on in a brawl. Paul is too old for that." And then, sneeringly: "Besides, I wouldn't trust the schooner with you. I don't think you could do anything with the crew, but there's always the chance you might try to run off with her. You're too good by half, young feller."

Looking over Stanford's shoulder, 'Bijah saw Da Souza nod his head reassuringly.

"Very good, sir," 'Bijah acknowledged quietly.

"It's a chance you ought to be thankful for," the captain concluded. "We'll teach you the how-and-why of the slave trade. And more of Africa than you'd learn in a year any other place, eh, Paul?"

CHAPTER XII

HELL AT FIRST HAND

'BIJAH settled himself in the canopied sternsheets of the barge, a tumult of conflicting emotions racking his thoughts. He didn't like the devil lights flickering in Stanford's eyes. Da Costa he had classified as a thoroughly detestable person. He didn't like the feeling of not knowing what was going to happen, except that in any case it would be more or less disagreeable.

Propelled by the rippling muscles of the giant black oarsmen, the barge sped swiftly across the muddy water toward a spindly pier which projected from the river's bank. Despite the cannon, there was nothing really civilized about the fort's appearance. It blended perfectly with its background, the impenetrable green wall of the forest, edging the furthest gardens. A raw, fecund, savage land.

The barge ran up alongside the pier and made fast, the oarsmen jabbering jovially to one another. Despite their filed teeth, and the scarifications which made hideous masks of their faces, they were as carefree and happy as schoolboys, deft in service and pleasant in manner. Da Costa they hoisted to the pier, grimacing under the torrent of oaths he belched at them. Stanford leaped out with his usual lithe grace. Da Souza stepped up to the higher level with only 'Bijah's hand to steady him.

Da Costa waddled ahead of the procession to shore, where a knot of black men waited with litters, cane chairs bound between two poles and roofed with woven withes. The sun was hotter than 'Bijah ever had known it. The air was heavy and lifeless. The stenches were appalling. He dropped into a chair with a sensation of relief. His clothes already were damp with sweat. Yet the Negro bearers swung along at a dog-trot, their uncovered heads and naked bodies impervious to the blasting heat as they breasted the sloping road to the fort.

They had gone only a little way when the advance bearer yelled a warning, and the procession swerved from the road. 'Bijah looked out to see what had happened. A fifteen-foot crocodile lay insolently across the right-of-way, apparently sluggish after a meal. 'Bijah shuddered, snatched at a pistol, then remembered the warning he had received and took note of the scaly armor covering the creature's back. Nothing could have made him comprehend so instantaneously the miasma of superstition and callous disregard of human life which enshrouded him. For the first time in his experience he had an acute sensation of being poised on the brink of hell.

At the sallyport of the fort a halfcaste in a dirty white uniform jacket and a loin cloth scuffed bare heels together and presented a very foul musket. The feet of the bearers thudded under the arch of the gateway, and they emerged into the sunlight of the parade. Unkempt

soldiers of all shades of color lounged in front of a range of barracks on one hand. Negresses in gee-strings passed back and forth about domestic duties—they were more numerous than the men. Naked children rolled and played in the dust. A fountain in the center spouted discolored water. Stepping out of his litter, 'Bijah saw that the breeches of the guns on the parapets overhead were coated with rust.

Da Costa led the way into a range of buildings on the river face of the fort, which showed some trace of cleanliness and order. A comely yellow girl rushed out to meet him and stripped him of his jacket, sword and hat. Another appeared to pull off his boots and pants. He casually wrapped his nude hulk in a blue loin cloth.

"Ouf," he grunted. "'Ow you make me the sweat, my Capitan! It ees not good to uphol' zhe deegnity of Governor. Take off the clothes, Senhors. Be 'appy."

"This will be enough for me," answered Stanford, doffing coat and shirt. "What about you, young feller?"

"I'm all right," 'Bijah said briefly.

"That's the new England spirit," jeered Stanford. "And Paul wouldn't be happy unless he had a cassock to put on. I could do something with a drink, your naked excellency."

DA COSTA clapped his hands, and two more women, young and remarkably pretty, came in with bottles and an earthenware jug of fruit juice. They were the nakedest women 'Bijah had ever seen; the better to conceal his embarrassment, he scrutinized the room in which he found himself. It was spacious, pleasantly cool and dim after the ferocious outer glare. Several hammocks hung from roof-beams, and comfortable chairs were scattered around. On a table was an immense bowl of fruit gorgeously tinted. Otherwise, the room was quite bare.

The women mixed drinks with a celerity which showed how accustomed they were to the task. One of them offered offered a glass to 'Bijah, who could not but be struck by the sweetness of her smile, the cleanness of her features, the sheen of her wavy, blue-black hair. Da Costa noticed his involuntary glance of appraisal, and exclaimed, with a smirk:

"Ah, no, my good young senhor of the New England, you cannot 'ave my Estrellita! She ees of my own get."

'Bijah scowled. Stanford examined the girl as critically as though she had been a filly.

"I remember," he said. "She was a child when I was here before. Care to sell her, Da Costa? I could get a good price for her."

"Eet mus' be mos' good," replied the governor. "She ees—'ow you say?—my leettle, especial one. The firs' wife."

'Bijah could cheerfully have throttled Da Costa with his bare hands. Fortunately for his peace of mind, no one observed his disturbance, beca[illegible] instant the air became alive [illegible] tant, throbbing murmur, ir[illegible] cadence but flatly methodical

"The drums, eh?" said Stanford. "I suppose B'Goma Nandi is calling in his people."

Da Costa waggled his fat shoulders.

"'E know you come. Zhat ees for the war party 'e 'ave out to tell zhem to fetch in the slave."

"He'll be making his call here soon, in that case," Stanford remarked, extending his glass for replenishment. "I wish you'd have up your bearers. Mr. Mayo and I want to have a look-see at what you have in the barrocoons before we talk business." He smiled coldly at 'Bijah. "That is, I take it for granted you want to learn the intricacies of the Trade, young feller." He addressed the governor again while 'Bijah glowered: "This is all a shocking business to Mr. Mayo, Da Costa. He doesn't hold with slavery He doesn't even want to accept his profit out of the voyage."

Da Costa snorted contemptuously.

"The more fool 'e! Me, eef I empty zhose barracoon two time more, eef I make good profit from you, I go 'ome to Lisboa and leeve like a king."

Stanford shook his head.

"That's what all you fellers say. But Africa gets you. If it isn't the fever, it's the wenches. As for your profit, I'll have to see what kind of meat you have for sale. Twenty or thirty girls of Estrellita's looks would turn in something worth talking about."

"We see, my Stanfor'," Da Costa answered doubtfully. "But the price—ah, zhat would be somesing you would like to talk."

"Maybe, maybe not," Stanford rejoined, and started pulling on his shirt. "I'll leave you to talk general terms with Paul." He turned to 'Bijah. "Well, come along, young feller. I'll show you your first barracoon. Something to remember the rest of your life."

'BIJAH followed him without answering, and Da Costa waddled with them onto the porch, clicking instructions to the bearers, who squatted on their haunches in the full glare of the sun.

The litters swayed out the sallyport, and down the elevation, in a direction parallel with the river, but inland—out of reach of marauding crocodiles, 'Bijah reflected grimly. Irrigation ditches laced the fields, every square foot lush with vegetable growths strange to him. Hordes of naked black people worked lanquidly. There were no overseers in evidence, but the laborers were so numerous that they got in each other's way. He wondered at the lack of guards. But the explanation came to him the moment he considered the anomaly. Where could the poor devils flee, if they tried to escape from bondage? On one side were the river and the crocodiles. Elsewhere they were barred in by the malignant restraint of the forest, its few trails doubtless watched by the warriors of B'Goma Nandi and haunted by wild beasts and reptiles.

When the litters reached the open gate in the thorn palisade surrounding the barracoons it was equally apparent that their inmates were under no drastic physical compulsion. A Portuguese half caste lounged in shelter by the entrance, but his only weapon was a whip, and from his bearing 'Bijah deduced that he was a policeman rather than a guard. The ground inside the palisade swarmed with Negroes, men, women and children, some of them cooking at tiny fires, some of them talking, some of them playing primitive gambling games. They were all stark naked.

Stanford, who had spoken shortly to the gatekeeper, must have perceived 'Bijah's puzzled frown. He laughed harshly.

"All Africans are gamblers, young feller. They're playing for their rations. They'd rather go hungry than not have the fun of matching those sticks and pebbles." He paused and looked around him. "Believe it or not," he resumed, "most of these people would rather be where they are than home in their own villages, liable to be raided any night, and lucky if they're killed outright, instead of being fattened for the pot or used in some damned witch-doctor's mumbo-jumbo. See anything else?" he challenged.

"No," 'Bijah answered slowly. "But wait! Yes, there are no old p

"Right! Anything else?"

"And no very young child

"You have the makings of a slave trader in you," Stanford applauded mockingly. "Now, we'll go the rounds, and find out if Da Costa means to do honestly by us."

"What about the people in the fields?" 'Bijah inquired.

"Second rate stuff. Da Costa ships a few to other Portuguese colonies or trades 'em with outlying chiefs, who want 'em just as beef or work slaves. Da Costa's an ignorant brute," Stanford

added absently. "He never pretended to take proper care of his stuff until I made him understand they'd be worth so much more if they went aboard ship fat and healthy. But he's learned since then. This lot aren't half bad. It ought not to be hard to choose two hundred and fifty, say. The wenches aren't as tasty as I'd prefer, but I have a suspicion B'Goma Nandi, the scoundrel, is holding out the choicest from his last raids. He knows he'll get more dealing direct with me, than if through Da Costa."

'Bijah thought the thousand Negroes in the open air, and the several hundred more they encountered inside the airy barracoons, were an extraordinarily healthy group. Scarcely any of them were over thirty. The youngest were from ten to fourteen—a girl was mature at the latter age. He was forced to admit to himself, too, that the majority of them seemed neither unhappy nor sullen. Never since entering the stockade had he been without the sound of laughter in his ears.

There were no downcast eyes when Stanford crooked his finger for a man or woman to stand up, and ran an expert hand over limbs and muscles. And they were entirely innocent and natural, only their eyes shifting from his face to 'Bijah as he commented casually:

"She's had a child, maybe two. Didn't nurse the last one long." Or: "What a blacksmith this buck would make! Shame to waste him as a field hand." Or: "Look at those eyes, the height of that brow! He must have chief's blood in him. Make a dependable foreman, carpenter, eh?"

EMERGING from the last barracoon into the sunlight, his glance raked 'Bijah quizzically.

"You didn't care for it, young feller? Well, remember this. As they are, they're so many wild cattle on the hoof. You can eat them or put them to work, same as an ox or a horse. They're made like you and me, leaving out the color of their hides. But they aren't the same, not by the distance from here to the moon. According to your Bible, they're the children of Ham, laboring under some extraordinary curse of inferiority wished on 'em by the good God. If they'd been born in another time, in another climate, in another part of the world—"

He shrugged, and his deceptive smile flickered momentarily.

"At that, they'll be going to church in a year, those of 'em that live through the Middle Passage. Figure that out, Mr. Mayo! You're helping to save a couple of hundred souls for Eternity, and incidentally, robbing that devil Sirosi of so many willing dupes and victims. Hark, though!"

The monotonous booming of the drums was pulsing again through the stagnant air, but this time there was no break in their rhythm, simply a steady flow of sound that echoed across the yellow river, where the *Diana* lay as motionless as though she were a picture of a ship painted on canvas.

"Not the talking drums," Stanford commented. "B'Goma Nandi's ceremonial drums. He's coming to make us a visit. I thought he would. I'll wager the damned grease-barrel has some bargains hidden in his huts. He wouldn't be in such a hurry, otherwise. Or it might be he's afraid of Sirosi. That's it! The Moon Dance! He doesn't want Sirosi to smell out any of his prime flesh." If 'Bijah hadn't known the captain so well, he might have fancied there was genuine warmth in the light that glowed in the blue eyes. "This couldn't be better. Whatever he's got, I'll pry it from him cheap."

OUTSIDE the thorn palisade, Stanford shaded his eyes, and peered upriver toward the sprawling rows of huts beyond the fields that comprised B'Goma

Nandi's town. 'Bijah, too, could see the snaky column, tipped with flashing spear-heads, winding into the beaten track which traversed the settlement. The booming of the drums was as persistent as the roll of gunfire. In 'Bijah's imagination, they beat upon his hearing like the roar of an invisible monster.

"This is the Voice of Africa!" they clamored. "Be afraid—be afraid—afraid—afraid—afraid! This is the Voice of Africa!"

The volume of noise made his brain ache numbly, not because it was so loud, but because it was so relentless. He compelled himself to wrench his attention from it, and stared out across the flats and the river at the anchored *Diana*. There were Lucy, and Lew, and Black Barnaby, a modicum of sanity.

He was aware that Stanford was speaking to him, and returned his attention to the captain, whose tone was light, but whose eyes sparked cold fire.

"—must invite you to consider that etiquette requires us to be prepared to receive the dark gentleman," Stanford was saying. "After all, he is the Futteh king. More, he has the rights of the high justice, the middle and the low—unless Don José Da Costa thinks fit to interfere, as he seldom does. As I have had occasion to warn you, if you should cause me too much trouble or tempt me to suspect your loyalty, I should not hesitate to sell you to B'Goma Nandi. He is very appreciative of white slaves. He has ways with them. So has Sirosi. Their crocodile god, you know, is indeterminate, but Sirosi has one singular pet in a back creek that Da Costa tells me is twenty-five feet long."

Something exploded in 'Bijah, and it must have shown in his expression, for Stanford retreated a step and clapped a hand on his cutlass hilt.

"Before that happens, Stanf[illegible] be dead," 'Bijah said, and hi[illegible] was as icy as the older man' [illegible] think I'm afraid of you. I [illegible] killing, but if I have to I'll kill you as quickly as I would that rat Da Costa."

He sank into his chair, snapped his fingers at the bearers and pointed to the fort. He didn't look back, but from the pattering of feet behind him he knew that Stanford was following—in silence.

CHAPTER XIII

B'GOMA NANDI AND SIROSI

WHEN 'Bijah entered Da Costa's quarters the governor was putting on his uniform with much grunting and cursing. Da Souza was busy over a stack of papers on the table.

"So," panted the governor. "You are come in time. But where ees the capitan?"

"He's coming," 'Bijah answered curtly.

Da Costa lumbered out of the room, and Da Souza, dipping his quill in an ink-well, peered up at 'Bijah.

"There was trouble," he stated flatly.

"Yes," admitted 'Bijah.

Da Souza sighed.

"There will be more. My advice is that you hold your temper."

Stanford loomed in the doorway, his hard face mottled red and gray. He strode to the table, picked up a bottle of rum and poured himself a tumbler, which he tossed off without drawing breath, then poured another.

"I'm a bad man to threaten, Mr. Mayo," he said.

"Then don't threaten me," 'Bijah told him coldly.

Da Souza set down his pen.

"If you please, Lion," he said, "we are here, not to quarrel, but to do business. If all goes well, we should be [illegible] put to sea within the two week[illegible]

"I'm aiming for a week—ten [illegible] most," returned Stanford. "An[illegible] needing this whelp here. I'll need him for several months." He laughed savagely. "After that, I hope he's shark's meat."

"You speak like a child," Da Souza said gently. "Mr. Mayo is always courteous and careful of his duty. I have no fault to find with him. It is you, Lion, who—"

"Oh, you've made a pet of him," snarled Stanford. "But he can't stand in my way. No one can."

"No one, Lion?" the supercargo queried in the same gentle tone.

Stanford swallowed the liquor in his glass. He was more like an irritated boy than 'Bijah had ever seen him. His fingers clinched on the glass until it seemed as if it must break. He filled it to the brim again, and drank it off. His face cleared.

"Paul," he said, "there's no one like you—old friend." He turned on 'Bijah. "But after this remember that I am *Captain* Stanford."

'Bijah grinned. He was rather enjoying himself.

"And I'm *Mr.* Mayo," he countered, "not 'young feller'."

Stanford measured him with a hostile glance, which changed slowly into an honest grin.

"Sorry I don't like you," he said. "We're too much alike in some ways—no offense, *Mr.* Mayo. And we're liable to both want the same things. But you have the right spirit, young feller." His grin broadened. "Never let a man down you, if you can help it. I never have yet."

A racket of howling and chanting penetrated the room, and Da Costa waddled in, wiping his face on a soiled sleeve, his sword dragging on the floor.

"Come," he panted. "The chair are place. Zhat black peeg B'Goma Nandi ees at the gate."

He conducted them out to the verandah, where a row of shabby arm chairs had been placed in the shade. Opposite was one chair of tremendous size.

"No chair for Sirosi, eh?" commented Stanford. "He'll be in a stew."

"Let heem feed heemself to the crocodile if 'e don' like," Da Costa replied.

"Before that happens, Stanford, you'll be dead!"

"No black man but the Futteh king 'ave a seat in zhis fort."

A COMPANY of the garrison, caricatures of soldiers, dawdled across the parade from their quarters and took position behind the four white men. The sun was declining, shooting its rays over the westward wall into the vent of the sallyport. The bedlam outside was nearer. Drums were rumbling, rattles clacking, deep Negro voices intoning a chant with a broken, reiterated cadence, repetitious but impressive.

Stanford selected the chair on the left

of the row. Da Costa sat next to him, then Da Souza. 'Bijah occupied the righthand chair. The old supercargo looked very tired, but his manner was as courteously considerate as always.

"If you like," he said to 'Bijah, "I will will translate for you what is to be said. It will be an experience more amusing, I have fear, than others you may anticipate."

"Thank you," 'Bijah acknowledged gratefully. "What are they singing?"

"Oh, that is a chant celebrating the virtues—" Da Souza wrinkled up his nose expressively— "of B'Goma Nandi. It goes something like this:

Oh, you people of the forest, you people of the rivers,
He comes, he comes.
Who comes? Who comes?
The bull of the forest,
The lord of the rivers,
The favored of the crocodile,
It is he! It is he!
Who is he? Who is he?
He is the great one, the mighty one.
He is as strong as the elephant, as as swift as the lion.
He is the lord of the Kishi-Aimani.
Whenever he speaks the trees rustle, the ground trembles.
He is B'Goma Nandi!

"And much more of the same. The African does nothing by the half, as your people say, my son. And in truth, B'Goma Nandi is a power to
oned with—if Sirosi does not p
some day. He must rule t
thirty thousand people."

The sallyport was suddenly
by a dense swarm of Negroes advancing at a hopping, halting gait. One step forward, one step aside, a stamp of the right foot, one step back and repeat.

First came a group of warriors carrying trade-muskets, tall, well-formed men. After them followed a smaller group of older men, thumping drums and waving rattles. An interval, and a litter appeared, born on the shoulders of eight giant blacks, in which sat a man who was so enormous that he was fantastic.

More than six feet in height, his width across the shoulders was proportionate and he was so fat that the rolls of blubber shook and quivered all over his body as the litter swayed on the bearers' shoulders.

He was entirely naked, except for an ancient, battered *chapeau bras* on his head and a cumbersome artillery sabre suspended from his immense belly by a belt of lion's skin.

His face was as big as the rest of him. The eyes were all but concealed by swollen jowls, but the wide, flat nose jutted out like a ship's prow, and the mouth was a cruel gash. Yet when the litter was lowered to the ground, 'Bijah saw that he stepped forward as if he walked on springs. Beneath all that fat there were muscles as tough and resilient as steel wires.

After him came a figure equally grotesque, a shriveled dwarf of a man, his body skin and bones, whose single garment was a crocodile skin draped over his shoulders, the fore-paws clasped across his chest, the tail dragging on the ground, the grinning mask projecting above the top of his head in the semblance of the raised visor of a medieval helmet. This headgear emphasized the satanic aspect of his miniature face, about the size of a child's. The nose was unmistakably aquiline, the eyes alive with an intelligence which—to 'Bijah's mind—was a reflection of evil incarnate. He carried a rattle, a human's skull on a stick, which he waved in time with the big man's stride.

"That is Sirosi," Da Souza murmured "No Christian priest has been able to supplant him in the hold he has on these people. He is very old, and the blacks say no man knows whence he is come. But it must have been from the interior. He has the look of a Zulu to me, and a bad one."

B'GOMA NANDI had stopped in front of the row of chairs at the front of the verandah.

He was evidently in high good humor, laughing and joking with the governor and Stanford, throwing a quip to Da Souza, which bent him from the waist in an uproarious burst of glee—promptly echoed by the hundreds of his guards. Then suddenly his manner became serious, and he extended a great paw toward 'Bijah. Stanford said something in the Kishi-Aimani dialect, and hailed the second mate.

"Attention, if you please, Mr. Mayo. His black majesty remarks that you seem young to be a chief, and younger, in fact, to be the lieutenant of so redoubtable a personage as myself. Will you be kind enough to say something in answer to him?"

A profound hush settled over the black audience. B'Goma Nandi looked at 'Bijah with uncanny perspicuity, little yellow eyes probing his face."

"Tell him," 'Bijah fumbled, "tell him —oh, tell him that in my country a man becomes a chief when he earns it, not because his father was one."

"A good answer," Stanford endorsed, sarcasm underlying a surface of good humor, "all the better because he can't turn it."

He repeated what 'Bijah had said, and B'Goma Nandi raised his right arm in a gesture of salute. A stream of guttural syllables boomed from his chest.

"He says he would like to adopt you as his son," Stanford translated. "But I wouldn't accept—you'd not care for the experience. Now, say something complimentary to him. All this means business, you know. Whether you like it or not, it helps to earn your keep."

'Bijah was mad. He knew he was being baited. But he felt Da Souza's thin, old elbow pressing against his ribs, and caught a grip on himself. Sooner or later he and Stanford must clash. There was Lucy between them, let alone other things. But Sao Sebastian was the most dangerous place in which the clash could happen. Better the *Diana*. Here, if he killed Stanford, he could scarcely hope to escape.

He drew himself up to his full height, bowed slightly to B'Goma Nandi—he didn't so much as glance at Stanford.

"Tell the king," he said slowly, "that the young chief Mayo thinks of B'Goma Nandi as one of the trees in his own country, tall and strong and casting shade on the people."

Stanford gave him an oc e-spect, and as the capta to translate Da Souza whisp

"The right words, my son, the right words."

B'Goma Nandi's reaction to them was immediate. If it might be said that a man of his bulk could strut, he strutted. His chest expanded, his ugly features became transfigured with pride. When Stanford had concluded he made a clumsy attempt to imitate 'Bijah's bow —to 'Bijah, not to Stanford—spun around with his amazing agility and boomed a command to the assembled warriors. They responded with a long-drawn yell, spears and muskets tossed aloft, and twice they repeated it.

In the midst of the confusion 'Bijah heard a dry clattering under his nose, and inclined his head to meet the baleful glare of Sirosi. The witch-doctor peered up at him from under the crocodile's mask like a snake trying to immobilize a victim. Then he brandished his hideous rattle again, and pranced away with a step that would have been ludicrous but for the sinister import which attended every move he made. 'Bijah noticed that as he passed in and out of the ranks of warriors all moved aside to give him room, even shoving one another to avoid his touch.

The Futteh king had seated himself in the chair placed for him. Two fires were kindled in front of the ranked Negroes, and torches flared at intervals from brackets in the walls against the

gathering darkness. Da Costa's wives appeared with bottles and glasses. But B'Goma Nandi scorned the proferred glass, turning the bottle upside down to his cavernous mouth, keeping it there until it was emptied. Stanford promptly did the same thing.

"Wah," exclaimed the king, tossing the bottle to the ground.

"I am in agreement with your black majesty," Stanford assured him.

AT THIS instant there was disturbance by the sallyport, nd 'Bijah rose to see more learly, suspecting that Sirosi might be up to some deviltry. By the light of the torches he descried a giant figure, nearly as bulky as B'Goma Nandi, threading a passage between the close-packed warriors. His heart sank as he identified the newcomer as Black Barnaby. Could anything be wrong aboard the schooner? Then he realized that Barnaby was shouldering a large bundle, probably presents for the Futteh king from the *Diana's* stores.

He went to meet the bosun, the Negroes scrambling out of his path with a celerity which indicated the effect upon them of the king's friendliness. Barnaby's sweaty face beamed as he saw 'Bijah.

"Gawblyme, Mr. Mayo, sir, 'ee be a sight for sore eyes! We *'ave* worried." He pitched his voice more moderately. "And while we got this minute to ourselves, the little maid is doin' fine, sir, and said as 'ow I was to give 'ee 'er love and tell 'ee to watch out for they crocs." He glanced around him. "My, my, wot a lot o' black people! I allus marvel at it, nary difference 'ow many times I see it. And old Fat Sow, isself, sittin' like a Christian, and a-matchin' the skipper's bottles. It do be like old times, sir—not that it wouldn't be best if there was no new times. 'Ow are 'ee, sir?"

"Good enough," 'Bijah told him. "Tell Miss Lucy we'll be here only a week or two, and—"

"Ah, there, bosun," hail "step lively. Our black ma impatient. Fetch the boo it out for him to paw over. drunkenly at 'Bijah, temporarily having forgotten his animosity. "Nothing like profusion to delight these people, young feller. And by the way, I owe you for another good job. By God, you're a regular Turk for piling up debts on a man! Didn't know you were a damned diplomat, as well as a navigator. Most astounding, young feller! But watch our black majesty in his nursery. This will be an eighteen-pounder shot in his belly."

Stanford didn't exaggerate. As Barnaby unfastened the parcel and spread its contents before his chair, B'Goma Nandi emitted a crow of delight, plopped down on his bulbous knees and scrabbled frantically in the tawdry heap of objects revealed to him—bolts of red and yellow cotton, case knives, hand-axes, beads, cheap jewelry, coils of copper wire, a pair of pocket pistols.

He was so absorbed that he would scarcely listen to what Stanford said to him, although finally he looked up with a delighted grimace and a spurt of gutturals.

"I told him there were two barrels of rum besides, Paul," Stanford called to the supercargo, "and that this junk was only to show how much we admired him." Stanford laughed with true heartiness, rubbing his hands together. "He'll sell us those wenches, now, no fear. He admits to having held out eighteen, and insists they're all virgins. A nice bonus for the voyage, eh?"

"They should be profitable," Da Souza agreed wearily. "But I think you should dismiss him. If he stays, he will become very drunk, and perhaps forget what has been said. And so will you, Lion. Also, there is work to be done tomorrow."

"I'm already drunk," Stanford replied matter-of-factly. "But we might as well be rid of him. He has what he came for. Tell him he has our leave to go, Da Costa."

The governor yawned assent, then turned vicious.

"I would keeck heem out wiz the boot, fat peeg! 'E 'ave kep' the bes' wench of the las' raid, so 'e may sell to you and rob me of my profit."

"What did you expect him to do?" Stanford retorted indifferently. "He isn't as big a fool as he pretends. If you paid him a fair price, he probably wouldn't take the chance of having Sirosi smell out a couple of 'em. And oh, that reminds me. The Moon Dance is tomorrow night. I've got to be there—you too, Mr. Mayo. I'll be damned if I'll let Sirosi feed a couple of thousand dollars to his crocodiles."

CHAPTER XIV

THE MOON DANCE

B'GOMA NANDI didn't want to go home. He was having too good a time, and loudly demanded another bottle. Having consumed it, however, and being reassured of his two barrels of rum, he reluctantly departed, a toy music-box tinkling in one hand.

'Bijah scrawled a hasty note to Lucy on a piece of paper Da Souza g and entrusted it to Barnaby, wh be returned to the schooner in ernor's barge. And presently th went off in a style comparable to B'Goma Nandi's, attended by an escort of bargemen carrying torches and yelling ferociously to frighten stray crocodiles from the river road. Barnaby had had his fair share of rum, thanks to 'Bijah's intervention, and was a trifle unsteady as he said good-by.

'Bijah was glad to avail himself of Da Souza's invitation to share the supercargo's bedchamber.

"Much goes on which I think would not be to your taste," the old Portuguese said simply. "If you do not obect to a hammock in my room, you may at least be sure of sleeping undisturbed."

He did, and awoke in the much refreshed. It was early. had not yet climbed high eno annoying and he and Da Sou fasted on coffee and fruit on the porch. Stanford and Da Costa, rising belatedly, munched fruit and drank rum and embarked upon an interminable wrangling of bargaining.

In the afternoon they took a box of brass tags, and were carried to the barracoons to choose out slaves and tag them for shipment. 'Bijah they mercifully left to his own devices.

The talking drums were booming with monotony which had a numbing effect upon the brain. 'Bijah finally yielded to it, and dozed in a hammock in the governor's living room, one of the comely women of the household standing beside him to fan away the insects.

He was awakened at last by the entrance of the others. Stanford let out a lusty guffaw.

"There you are, my Puritan laddy buck! So you've found a use for the yellow wenches, after all. Don José will have to keep a watch on you." 'Bijah tumbled out of the hammock, flushed and abashed. Stanford shook his head ironically. "Spruce up a bit. We've got this Moon Dance on our hands, business to transact and God knows what else to expect. We're going in style. Even Da Costa is putting on a clean uniform." Da Souza, in the bedroom, smiled wanly at him, and set down a glass of brandy —an indication of the supercargo's fatigue, for he rarely touched strong liquors.

"I think you will need the command of your wits tonight, my son. As sure as there is a hell for guilty souls—" he crossed himself—"we are to witness an earthly image of it." He took another sip of brandy reflectively. "Yes, the one excuse for what we do is that we may be able to save a poor woman or two from the crocodiles, and perhaps—who knows?—insure them a chance of Paradise."

THEY bathed and dressed rapidly, and rejoined Stanford and Da Costa on the parade. Darkness was closing in, and shiftless as were the troops, 'Bijah was glad to see a platoon of the garrison mustered to escort them.

Both Stanford and Da Costa had become mildly intoxicated in the brief interval since their return to the fort, and several cases of bottles in a spare litter suggested that they intended to better their condition. Indeed, Stanford said as much. "None of that filthy nigger beer or trade rum we feed B'Goma Nandi for me," he proclaimed, lurching into his chair. "We'll drink white man's liquor."

The thundering of the ceremonial drums attended them through the gardens of the Portuguese settlement. A ruddy glare encompassed the Negro town, coming from a circle of huge bonfires outlining an expanse of beaten earth fronting the group of structures comprising B'Goma Nandi's compound. The king was there to greet them, enormous, bibulous, hilariously friendly. Thousands of blacks milled around in the shadows, their presence perceptible by the glint of their teeth and the whites of their eyes, visible whenever the bonfires leaped higher.

B'Goma Nandi escorted his guests to a row of stools before his own dwelling. Beside his seat stood a barrel of rum with the head knocked in, and he insisted upon each of them draining a cocoanut shell of the venomous spirits before he would drink himself. Da Souza expertly contrived to spill most of his drink while the king was making a fuss over 'Bijah, who, being placed in the forefront, was obliged to swallow a whole portion of the fiery stuff, much to Stanford's amusement. But for his own sake Stanford came to the party's rescue, and informed the king that rather than trespass on the royal cellar they had brought with them a supply of liquids for the evening's entertainment. B'Goma Nandi was properly impressed, and accepted the bottles offered him, but 'Bijah noticed that he frequently dipped surreptitiously into his barrel of trade-rum, the unmitigated strength of which was more to his fancy than the smooth liquor of the white men.

Dinner was served by shapely Negro women on a tray of woven grass which must have been four feet in diameter. It was a savory mess of vegetables, nuts and meats of various kinds, which 'Bijah thought delicious, although he didn't enjoy having to eat with his fingers. B'Goma Nandi beamed at him when he licked them off, and reached for more.

"What is it?" he whispered to Da Souza.

"Better not ask," replied the supercargo, who was eating sparingly. "It will not injure you. Many meats which we white people despise are really nourishing."

After that 'Bijah didn't enjoy and tried to restrict his selectic vegetable elements on the tray awed by the performance of who swallowed double handfuls at a gulp, consuming more than the four white men together—not that Da Costa was a poor trencherman.

THE great yellow moon came up over the forest rim, shedding a radiance that put to shame the glare of the bonfires. It was as light as day, a soft, mellow light. The masses of black people became distinct, sitting on the ground or standing expectantly, waiting—waiting for Sirosi! Off to one side, he saw the Portuguese soldiers—Portuguese or soldiers by courtesy—squatting over trays of food or making blundering advances to the women assigned to wait on them.

Behind the four white men and the king, their backs to the entrance of the royal hut, stood a row of young women, their arms folded, their faces mirroring a heartbreaking combination of fear, interest and the expectancy

which blanketed all their people. Everyone of them was beautiful.

Stanford started up from his seat.

"The king's hidden treasures," he exclaimed. "And by God, they were worth hiding!"

With Da Costa he went up and down the line, examining each with the impersonal thoroughness which had so revolted 'Bijah in the barracoons.

"They'll do, Paul," he called over his shoulder. "A sound lot. I think his pigship will listen to reason, but we've got to have 'em at any decent price. They'll add fifty per cent to the voyage's profits."

Da Souza sighed and said nothing, his gaze fixed on the vacancy in which he sought refuge from his unhappiness.

"About time Sirosi started his deviltry," Stanford commented, returning to his seat.

Suddenly the drums commenced to rumble again in a jerky, broken rhythm. Hundreds of slim, lithe figures drifted out of the crowds of blacks onto the dancing place, bodies swaying in time to the hysterical tempo of the drums.

"Watch this, young feller," Stanford called to him. "You have to come to Africa to see anything like it."

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the tempo of the drums increased in speed, and with it the whirlwind pace of the dancers. Hips and torsos undulating, feet stamping in a cadence that violated every convention of civilized music, the hundreds of naked black bodies gyrated in the golden moonglow. Not until afterwards did 'Bijah learn the significance of the ceremony. The virgins were dedicating themselves to the crocodile god, or, if they were not chosen for him, to the labor of mothering the next generation of the Kishi-Aimani.

Except for the drums and the thudding of feet on the hard-packed earth, the panting of lungs driven to the bursting point, there was not a sound audible. Stanford and B'Goma Nandi had given over their conversation. Da Souza looked at the spectacle, but did not see it. He had a rosary in his hand, and the beads slipped through his fingers with a little hissing purr that could scarcely be called a sound.

The thousands of blacks around the dancing place were as immobile as so many statues of ebony. 'Bijah experienced once more that feeling that they were waiting, waiting for the shriveled dwarf, Sirosi. The whole effect was repulsive, sinister—but undeniably beautiful. Those lovely Negresses, everyone with life unfolding before her, knowing that within a short while certain of them would be chosen for a horrible death!

AND then Sirosi came. 'Bijah didn't see his entrance. But in a breath the whirling dancers froze into stillness. One moment they were an intricate maze of movement, the next you could have sworn there was no life in them. They stood there, black shadows in the moonlight—so still, so very still, expectant of life or death. The air that whistled in 'Bijah's nostrils was sour with the taint of fear.

The drums had ceased, all but one which was throbbing in slow, dragging time, interspersed abruptly at intervals by hoarse bellows of noise, uncannily bestial in suggestiveness. It was to this accompaniment that Sirosi appeared, prowling in step with the horrid din amongst the ranks of virgins. His meager figure, draped in the crocodile hide and mask, would have been comic if it had not been for the pervasive hint of evil he contrived to evoke by sheer force of egotism.

In his right hand he carried a wand, tipped by a carven crocodile's head, and when he thrust this at a girl's breast a great sigh of anguish drifted up from the audience. The girl sank prostrate on the ground, mute, apparently lifeless, her arms stretched out before her.

Sirosi prowled on, sniffing, hesitating, continuing, once in a while tapping an

unfortunate with his wand. The assembled multitude watched him fascinated, but there was no further evidence of feeling. 'Bijah was growing restless. The horror of the scene was gnawing at his conscience. He felt that it was impossible for a white man to overlook such a ritual and retain his self respect.

Stanford noticed his perturbation, and the slaver spoke calmly, the vibrant voice little more than a whisper:

"Take it easy, young feller. We're going to have trouble, anyway, or I miss my guess. Watch Sirosi."

An hour had passed, but so tense was the atmosphere that it had seemed like ten minutes. A dozen girls l dancing place. And at last Sir out from the loose ranks in fr royal hut. He cackled, and brief announcement.

"I thought so," Stanford said quietly. "He says the god is still hungry. Here he comes. And he's going to have the surprise of his life."

'Bijah tensed as the dwarfed figure strutted towards them. Sirosi's objective was plainly the line of quivering girls over whom Stanford had been dickering with B'Goma Nandi. He seemed to be intoxicated by the power he had demonstrated, to wish to show to his people that not even the Futteh king and the white men could raise a barrier to the appetite of the crocodile god.

B'Goma Nandi himself looked startled, but he made no remonstrance. It was Stanford who spoke sharply in the Kishi-Aimani dialect as Sirosi darted his head with reptilian ardor at one of the girls in the line. Sirosi checked, and turned angrily upon the slaver, clicking a retort. Stanford stood up, towering over the witch-doctor. 'Bijah rose too.

Sirosi stared contemptuously at both of them from under his crocodile's mask, and resumed his inspection of the line. His wand leaped toward a naked breast, the girl shrinking from its touch. Stanford snapped a command, reached out a long arm and twitched the dwarf backwards.

The witch-doctor glared at Stanford a moment. One hand fumbled under his cloak, and steel flashed in the moonglow. 'Bijah leaped into action. His fist caught the dwarf on the jaw, and Sirosi tumbled head over heels, landing in a heap in front of the Futteh king, who sat there goggling stupidly. A gasp went up from the thousands of Negroes. Sirosi had been struck—and the man who had struck him had not perished! Guttural voices clicked in a blare of anger.

Stanford wheeled, saw the knife on the ground.

"Good work," he snapped. "Da Costa, order up your men."

THE governor scrambled to his feet, befuddled by the liquor he had drunk, shouting an order to the escort. 'Bijah reached down, and hauled up Da Souza, who seemed completely at a loss in the situation.

"That's right," Stanford called. "You take care of Paul."

Bayonets closed around the group as the Negroes started to surge forward. And Da Souza came to life with a celerity that was astounding. He stepped in the path of the advancing blacks, and when he passed Sirosi's huddled figure he spurned the witch-doctor with his foot. His voice rang out in a volume which carried to the opposite side of the dancing place. It was denunciatory, commanding. The Negroes stopped in their tracks. And once more they gasped as he stooped, ripped the crocodile cloak from Sirosi's shoulders and tossed it away.

He snatched a crucifix from his pocket, raised it aloft and switched from Kishi-Aimani into Latin, the sonorous periods rolling from his tongue like music from a pipe-organ. He stooped again, retrieved Sirosi's wand and broke it across the crucifix, tossing the jagged fragments after the witch-doctor's cloak. The black

The witch-doctor's steel flashed in the moon-glow.

people stood rooted wherever they were.

One last burst of Kishi-Aimani, and Da Souza stepped back, clutching for 'Bijah's arm.

"If it please you, my son," he murmured. "I am faint."

Stanford patted his back.

"Oh, Paul, Paul," exclaimed the slaver. "You're the best man of the lot. Between us, we've handled this business so that no harm will come of it. B'Goma

Nandi is delighted to have Sirosi discredited—we're taking these girls back to the barracoons with us." He hailed Da Costa over his shoulder. "We'll move the plunder here first. You follow after us with your men." And to 'Bijah: "By God, this was a good night's work, young feller! It means a handsome profit for you—if you'll only forget that sniveling New England conscience of yours and act like a man."

'Bijah was torn by a conflict of disgust and white-hot rage.

"Keep your black money," he snarled. "I only saved you from that knife because if it had been driven home the rest of us would have been murdered. You can't make a panderer out of me."

Stanford laughed good-naturedly.

"You can't make me angry tonight," he said.

CHAPTER XV

DIVINITY IN ARMOR

DRUGGED by excitement as much as by the liquor he had consumed, 'Bijah slept until noon.

Da Costa, Stanford and Da Souza had left for the barracoons and the ugly business of selecting and checking additional items for the homebound cargo. He ate his breakfast glumly, a disposition accentuated by the fact that he nursed an undeniable hangover, which he reduced somewhat by a draught of rum and cocoanut milk. Afterward he went out on the verandah, and surveyed the dismal prospect of the fort, unvarying in its monotonous squalor. He must do something, anything; and he hailed a lolling sentry.

"Capitao Stanford?" he asked inquiringly.

The sentry pointed upriver to the barracoons, with an explosive ejaculation of Portuguese, and 'Bijah started down the slope of the hillock. The sentry called after him, pointing to 'Bijah's bare head and indicating in pantomine the motions of a litter.

'Bijah made a gesture of assent, and the soldier propped his musket against the wall, pattered inside the fort and reappeared in a few moments accompanied by a group of bearers and one of the governor's makeshift vehicles. It seemed to 'Bijah that they evidenced unusual friendliness; and along the road the slaves working in the fields looked up and waved to him, as they had never done before. But he had no opportunity for speculation. A dreadful treble scream trembled on the torpid air, and the bearers swung aside with a violence which nearly flung him from his chair, clicking hysterically to one another.

"Stop!" he shouted. And realizing they could not understand him, thrust out his foot and kicked the right leadman's shoulder. The fellow checked; the litter lurched to a stop, the gaze of the four bearers focussed on him fearfully. As he jumped out, they all babbled confusedly in remonstrance. He understood why at a glance. An enormous crocodile was crawling up from a field a few yards ahead, its jaws clamped shut on the mangled body of a child.

'BIJAH'S reaction was as instinctive as it would have been to a shift of wind. He ran forward, pistol in hand, an agonized wailing in his ears, and stood directly in the thing's path. Its blank, soulless eyes stared at him, its tails commenced to switch. He knew he must act instantly. He knew the armored flanks would turn the lead. So he stepped closer, and put a ball through the left eye, and as the jaws gaped in reflexion he put a second ball through the right eye.

The jaws snapped shut, the heavy tail twitched slower and slower, stopped, twitched feebly—stopped. But the ruined eyes continued to stare implacably at him, and the jaws clung to the pitiful corpse which was reddening the dust of

the road. He couldn't be sure it was dead as he stepped back, and reloaded feverishly, that awful wailing from the fields throbbing like the drums in his consciousness.

Watching it warily, noticing how the stubby legs dug their great
the dust, he advanced agai
twice more into the eye-so
time the reptile's whole bod
convulsively as if it would charge him. For a second he thought it would. Instead, it rolled over slowly on its back, and lay motionless, livid belly to the sun. But its jaws did not loose their grip on the object that had been a child.

'Bijah stuck the pistols in his belt, wiped the sweat from his eyes, forced himself to restrain the nervous tension of his body and walked leisurely back to the litter. The four bearers groveled in the dust before him, ashen-faced. The nearer workers in the fields were all prone.

He climbed into the chair, and clapped his hands, half-expecting not to be obeyed. But the bearers bounded to their feet, bowing low to him with an awe he found amusing. They *were* impressed. He pointed toward the barracoons.

"Capitao Stanford," he said.

They lifted the shafts to their shoulders and broke into their swinging dog-trot, but they gave the dead crocodile a wide berth. Behind him 'Bijah heard a murmur of voices. The workers were standing, peering after him as though they had witnessed a miracle.

STANFORD met him at the
entrance to the *boma*, a trifle
bloodshot of eye, but as debonair as usual after a debauch.
bauch.

"Feeling yourself again?" the slaver inquired casually. "Heard shooting, didn't I?"

"I killed a crocodile," 'Bijah answered. "The damned thing had just taken a child."

Stanford raised his eyebrows.

"God! Is there anything you won't try, young feller?" He burst into sardonic laughter at 'Bijah's look of contrition. "You would! For one pic that probably would have cashed in anyhow for one reason or another, or been sold for the pots by B'Goma Nandi when he felt poor."

'Bijah stiffened.

"Of course, technically, it was against orders—sir," he said, giving Stanford the formal acknowledgment of superiority he seldom accorded nowadays. "I'm sorry for any trouble I may cause. I'm in your hands."

"In your hands," Stanford repeated. There was an odd respect in his tone. "Yes, you'd say that, and mean it. I wish we could be friends, as I've said already. Well, there's no use crying over spilt rum, eh? As for the croc, don't worry. Probably nobody but you could carry off such an outrage."

He chuckled on that sardonic note, his face quite mirthless. "As it happens, Mr. Mayo, you are B'Goma Nandi's high card for the moment. He took advantage of what you did last night to have Sirosi speared. Always hated the old devil, jealous of him, into the bargain."

"I'll be damned," 'Bijah said, a little shaken. "I suppose I'm to blame for that. For another man's death."

"My guess is that you'll be to blame for many men's deaths, young feller," Stanford retorted grimly. "But you're an ass if you waste a breath of sympathy on Sirosi."

He changed the subject abruptly.

"How did you kill the croc?"

'Bijah told him, and an inner light warmed Stanford's cold eyes.

"Never occurred to you the brute might drop a small bit of meat to go after a bigger one, did it?" he asked.

"No," 'Bijah said simply. "It didn't have time to."

Stanford laughed silently.

"You ought to see one of 'em in

action," he advised. "How big was it?"

"I thought it was better than three fathoms, but I'm not sure."

Stanford looked him up and down.

"Well, well," said the slaver. "I've had more than one reason to be sorry I signed you on, and as many to be glad for it. But after this I wish, and no disrespect intended, young feller, that I'd showed you the door that day in the Commodore Porter." His grin was boyishly derisive.

"By the way, B'Goma Nandi is paying us a state visit tomorrow. He has some gold dust and elephant ivory I may be able to buy to advantage. And he'd like to adopt you, but he'll forget that after a dozen jorums of rum. You'd better go back to the fort, and enjoy yourself with Da Costa's women. He's insulting you, young feller, by claiming they're safe with you."

"They are," snapped 'Bijah.

That mirthless smile flickered across Stanford's iron features.

"I believe you, Sir Galahad. Ever read Mallory's 'Morte D'Arthur'? You should. I glance at it once in a while to remind myself that such men really have existed." He became serious with one of his lightning changes of mood. "If I dared, I'd send you aboard the *Diana*. That's where you're needed to hustle the work in the hold. Wells is an old woman. He can't sweat the work out of the men. And that will delay me an extra day or two, possibly give the *Falcon* a chance to kedge off the shoal or clear one of her boats to make contact with another cruiser. We can't afford to be blockaded. The rains are coming. That means fever, and fever would lose us half the crew."

'Bijah's face went white as he pictured Lucy on a fever-ship.

"I'll give you my word of honor—" he started to say.

Stanford smiled.

"Yes, white women go quicker than men in this country," he said. "Thought of that myself. But I wouldn't take your word, Sir Galahad, in the circumstances."

He nooded off-handedly and strolled away, leaving 'Bijah more baffled than ever by the dark mystery of his contradictory character.

RETURNING to the fort through the shimmering heat-waves of mid-afternoon, 'Bijah perceived that the field-workers had dragged the crocodile from the road, and were systematically hacking it apart with their simple tools, reeking a childishly vicious revenge upon the dead monster. It was disgusting and pathetic, the more pathetic because they gave over their diversion to prostrate themselves before him as he passed.

B'Goma Nandi appeared toward noon the following day, attended by his usual retinue, drums booming, warriors prancing, but no witch-doctor to divide attention with him. Rising from his chair, he immediately hurled himself upon 'Bijah, clamoring the meanwhile with an enthusiasm which indicated he had paid due attention to his rum barrels.

"What—is—this?" 'Bijah gasped, seizing the king's hands, partly to show he meant no offense, partly to insure against a repetition of the performance.

B'Goma Nandi boiled along like a mammoth kettle, the words rumbling up from his chest. Stanford interrupted with a question, took a mug of rum from a table and gave it to 'Bijah.

"I'll be damned," swore the slaver. "The least you can do is to offer him this, yourself." And as 'Bijah mechanically complied, and the king [illegible] the contents down his throat at a [illegible] old son! Young feller, I don[illegible], but you certainly have a po[illegible]. I told you he'd want to adop[illegible] such thing! He's heard about how you shot the croc. That's evidence to him of —well, your pseudo-divinity. He doesn't want you for a son. He's suggesting that you take on the crocodile's godhead. He guarantees to set you up as an accepted living god, let you name your own suc-

cessor and a quarter of the royal plunder —you can raise him on that last. It's a compliment. You aren't to be a cheap witch-doctor, a mere high priest. You're to be the god himself."

'Bijah was torn between laughter and wrath.

"That's right," Stanford approved. "Be angry. Don't show pleasure. He shouldn't have man-handled a god. He's only a king. Go on, tell me what to say. We may make something out of this."

B'GOMA NANDI'S great, flat face was tense with ardor. His yellow, bloodshot eyes glowed fervently.

"Tell him—" 'Bijah choked—"oh, tell him a king doesn't hug a god. Ask him what he thinks the crocodile god would have done to him. I'll forgive him, Captain. But I can't accept. I've got a job of divinity to do at home. Give him my blessing. And no!"

"Excellent," endorsed Stanford. "Watch him after I've embroidered it artistically."

The slaver drew himself up to his full height, his resonant voice clicking the native dialect in curt, authoritative phrases. B'Goma Nandi all but wailed, and prostrated himself on the ground before 'Bijah as humbly as the slaves in the fields. His followers imitated him, their pleas for mercy shrilling to the brazen sky.

Stanford smiled wryly.

"I'm in your debt again, damn it," he admitted. "Now, we'll have that ivory and gold dust out of the fat scoundrel on unbeatable terms. I'll hold back your absolution until he shows reason. He's scared to death you'll put a curse on him, make his wives barren and his crops and cattle fail."

'Bijah's simulated anger became genuine.

"If I'd known you were using me for a swindle this would have gone differently," he raged, and stamped off the verandah.

"A good exit, young feller!" jeered Stanford. "Thanks. You've got his black majesty shaking like a jelly-bag."

CHAPTER XVI

CAPTAIN STANFORD'S JOKE

STANFORD became more morose from day to day. He was palpably irked by 'Bijah's ascendancy over B'Goma Nandi, although he did not hesitate to exploit the circumstance for his own advantage. And he lived in a perpetual wrangle over money with Da Costa. Da Souza, too, seemed to have lost the control over him which had intrigued 'Bijah. The old supercargo, after several attempts to control his prodigious consumption of liquor, left him severely alone, except in one instance, which 'Bijah happened to overhear.

This, in its inception, had to do with his infatuation for Estrellita, the lovely little unfortunate who had been servant of the governor. In the beginning her allocation to Stanford had been in the nature of a chattel loan, but Stanford's magnetism wore down her antipathy, and rapidly won her passionate adoration.

The result was the conclusion of a more or less nebulous bargain for her possession between Stanford and Da Costa, another source of dispute between them. And this incident, trivial in itself, was the cause of Stanford's sudden determination to break with Da Costa. The issue came to a head one evening several days before the *Diana* was due to sail. The governor, much the worse for liquor and bewildered by Stanford's increasing animosity, had retired to his harem. Stanford and Da Souza were sitting in the living room, compiling the schooner's manifest. 'Bijah, smoking his pipe on the verandah, had his attention caught by an interval of silence between them. After an interval Da Souza's voice came distinctly to his ears.

"But this you cannot do, Lion! This is beyond nature."

"Why?" Stanford challenged coolly. "She's better off with me than she is with that monstrosity."

"Is she to go the way of the others?"

"No, I have plans for the future. She'll turn in a handsome profit in Cuba. By God, Paul, I have no intention ing the rest of my life with a q

"But there is Miss Adams t sidered."

"Miss Adams will have to get used to this—and a great deal more. I have plans—for her. I'm going to retire after this voyage."

Chair legs scraped as Da Souza rose from the table.

"We should have parted company in any case, Lion," he said. "After what has happened, after what you say, I can have no further association with you. There was always in me the hope that you— But that hope is dead."

Stanford laughed cynically.

"I've just had an idea," he said. Liquor trickled into a glass as 'Bijah listened, fascinated. "Sit down, Paul. I said sit down! I let you boss me a good deal—you have an infernal trick of appealing to my dwindling reservoir of sentiment. But I'm tired of being hectored, even by you."

He gulped what must have been a tumbler of neat rum. "I'm going to wind up my visits to the Aimani in a way that won't be forgotten."

There was another interval of silence. When Da Souza answered perturbation was evident in his voice.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I'm through dickering with Da Costa. Why pay him for what I can take? I'm not coming back here, so—" He left the sentence unfinished. "Hey, young feller," he called. "You out there?"

'Bijah stepped into the doorway.

"It won't do you any harm, if there's sense left in that milk-and-water husk of yours, to have heard what I just said," Stanford informed him with drunken gravity. "We're going aboard the schooner. Come along, Paul."

"At this hour?" objected Da Souza.

"As good an hour as any." Stanford chuckled. "Won't be healthy for you here, Paul. I'm going to raise hell with Sao Sebastian. You both ought to be glad. Don't you understand? I'm abandoning my life of crime. I'm going to get out of the Trade. And as a final gesture I'm going to punish one of the plague-spots on the West Coast as thoroughly as any British cruiser I'll receive the thanks of P yet."

'Bijah looked questioning Souza, whose head was sunk on his chest.

"Stay, if you want to," Stanford jeered. "I'll be pleased to have Miss Lucy to myself."

He called Estrellita, who glided out of a doorway, her body glistening like gold in the mellow lamplight.

'Bijah was at a loss. He was tempted to attack Stanford, but he knew that a fight here in the fort would be disastrous, no matter who was victor. In the midst of his dilemma Da Souza raised his head.

"We will go with you, Lion," he said quietly. "It is my belief that is best, Mr. Mayo."

'Bijah said nothing. What could he say, fists clinched at his sides, anger flaming in his brain?

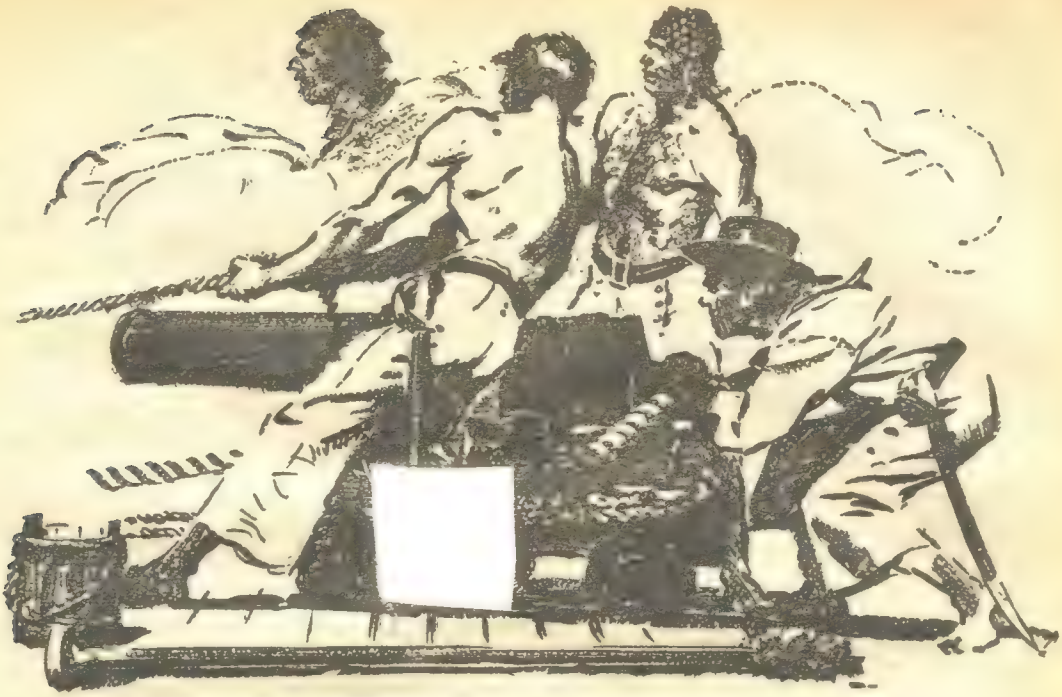
Stanford laughed again, wickedly jovial, and tossed off a second tumbler.

"Thought you would," he said, and spoke in Portuguese to Estrellita, who picked up a piece of red cloth from a chair and wrapped it around herself from breasts to knees.

The two led the way out of the governor's quarters, Da Souza and 'Bijah following them.

"What is going to happen, Senhor?" 'Bijah whispered.

"Nothing which need prick your conscience, my son," replied the old supercargo. "But I pray you keep a hold on your temper, as I have bidden you in the



"Give it to him! Pound him under!"

past." He shrugged his shoulders. "If the wicked fall out and quarrel, perhaps the innocent may escape them. We will see. But remember, no matter what happens, I am your friend."

AT THE sallyport, Stanford wakened the sleeping sentry and dispatched him to arouse the boat's crew. They appeared immediately, rubbing the sleep from their eyes, but not too sleepy to have forgotten to bring torches to frighten marauding crocodiles out of the path.

'Bijah was prey to a tumult of emotions during the walk to the pier. There was Stanford's veiled reference to Lucy's future. It might be no more than a reflex of drunken egotism. But there was nothing uncertain about the fact that for the first time since 'Bijah had boarded the schooner Da Souza had failed to control Stanford. And there was the additional complication of Estrellita. She would be as dangerous as an open powder barrel aboard the *Diana*.

His purely primitive instinct was still to fight Stanford on the spot, but ranged in opposition to this were Da Souza's advice, which always had been good, and the realization that if anything should happen to himself Lucy's plight must be incalculably worse than it was at the moment. So he forced himself to keep a firm hold on the anger chafing his soul.

The lazing tropic stars and a three-quarters moon flooded the river with light. The barge was sighted from the *Diana* as soon as it left the pier, and all hands were on deck as it pulled alongside the schooner. Stanford went up the ladder first, Estrellita after him, nimble as a cat. 'Bijah assisted Da Souza to ascend, and was last over the bulwarks. He noticed at once that the crew were armed, and that iron gratings had been bolted over the hatches. Tiers of additional water-butts were chocked and lashed aft of the galley. Black Barnaby and Lew were prominent in the silently inquisitive half-circle of the crew. Mr. Wells was for once almost vociferous.

"—sure ye'll find everything done right, sir," he was protesting. "Bars, ring-bolts and shackles rigged in the hold, and—"

"No reason why it shouldn't be," Stanford cut him off. "But I don't want bolts pulling loose in a storm, and a mob of black cattle scrambling around down there. I'll see to it later. Peletiah! Take this girl below to my stateroom—and leave her alone, you little devil, or I'll skin your ears for you. . . . Barnaby, I want the batteries cast loose and provided—amply. All hands stand by. Oh, and one man with a musket, into that barge. I don't want those Negroes to sneak ashore."

In the midst of the resulting bustle, 'Bijah felt a tug at his sleeve, and Lew whispered to him:

"Miss Lucy's in the galley, 'Bije. We've had it all fixed to move her there 'soon as Mr. Satan come aboard." He steered 'Bijah through the mulling crowd of seamen. "Barnaby and me built bunks for the two of ye. Barnaby 'lowed as how she couldn't stand the cabin westward, and when I seed that yaller minx—"

They crossed the threshold of the galley-door, and there was Lucy, standing in the lantern-light, smiling tremulously, her eyes very bright.

"Oh, 'Bijah," she murmured. And then she was in his arms. After a while she took his chin in her hands, and peered up at his face. "My dear, my dear! You look as if—was it so terrible?"

"I'll tell you later," he said.

"Did you really kill that awful witch-doctor?"

"No, I only killed a croc," he laughed.

"But the men who went ashore said the natives thought you were a god."

"They were hard up for one, Lucy. Don't hold it against me. But I must get back on deck. Something is going to happen, I don't know just what. You stay in here. I'll come back if I have a chance."

She kissed him again.

"Are we ever going to get home?"

"We'll do our best," he started to say as Stanford's voice was raised in a vibrant: "Mr. Mayo! Mr. Mayo! Where is the—"

"Coming, sir," he answered, tore himself from Lucy's arms and ran out the door.

"Oh, there you are," Stanford greeted him. "I want a kedge-anchor out astern to keep the schooner riding head downstream. Look sharp about it. You can use that barge overside. We won't bother to hoist out a boat."

THE port battery, 'Bijah saw as he set about his task, had been run out, and Barnaby—with the glee which always animated the hairy man when he had a chance to play with his favorite toy—was swinging the brazen muzzle of the Long Tom to bear on the squat mass of Sao Sebastian, clearly limned in the moonlight atop of its elevation. Da Souza was nowhere to be seen.

So this was what was to happen! Sao Sebastian was to be blasted out of effective existence. And recollecting the antique, rusty cannon on its battlements, and considering the trim efficiency of the *Diana's* batteries, he had no doubt that Stanford would prevail. He was sorry for the frowsty Portuguese soldiers and their Negresses who lived in the fort's ramshackle casemates, sorry for the yellow women of the governor's harem. The one person he wasn't sorry for was Da Costa. Descending to the barge, after the kedge-anchor and a coil of cable had been lowered to it, he hoped devoutly that the fat governor would catch a roundshot in the belly.

Rigging the kedge was child's play on the placid Aimani. In fifteen minutes the barge was pulling back to the schooner, and in obedience to a hail in Portuguese from Stanford the startled black oarsmen made fast to the *Diana's* side. 'Bijah hauled himself aboard up a rope one of the sailors dropped to him.

Gun crews stood by each of the port carronades. Stanford and Black Barnaby and another sailor had the Long Tom trained on the northwest angle of the fort—the governor's quarters, 'Bijah recalled, with something of a shock.

Stanford held a bottle in his hand. He wiped off his mouth, and passed it to the bosun.

"Halloo, young feller," he greeted 'Bijah. "Care to take a section of carronades? You didn't seem to fancy Da Costa so much. Wouldn't like to have a shot at him, would you?"

"No thanks," 'Bijah declined. "I never cared about shooting people in their beds."

"Everyone to his taste," Stanford returned cheerily. "I'm going to bounce that blubber-tub off his mattress so hard he won't know when his behind hits the floor. . . . Ready, men! This is to be a broadside. Afterwards, fire at will. Port fires lit? Fire!"

The roar of the discharge was like a thunderclap out of a sunny sky. It reverberated through the jungles, its immediate aftermath a howling and bellowing and squeaking of animals roused from their slumbers or disturbed in their hunting forays. Clouds of smoke hung over the schooner, and were slowly dissipated by the languorous night wind. But almost instantly there echoed from the shore a faint and dismal clamor of many voices.

Sao Sebastian was too easy a mark to miss. In the moonlight 'Bijah could see the chunks of brick fly up from the walls as the roundshot hammered home, driving through the flimsy structure as easily as a hot knife slicing butter. He could picture to himself the panic on the parade, soldiers and women and children leaping from their hammocks, wondering if the end of the world had come. For who would venture to fire great guns into a fort beneath the banner of Portugal? Not the English with whom Portugal was at peace. Not B'Goma Nandi, who could boast nothing more formidable than second-hand trade muskets in his motley band of warriors. Who, then?

They wouldn't dream that Stanford would turn against them—Stanford, who was one of the economic mainstays of the post. If they could only see Stanford now! Lips drawn tight over his teeth, eyes concentrated to pin-pricks of cold flame, as he urged his men to reload, waiting impatiently for Barnaby to ram a second charge down the eighteen-pounder's barrel.

His wolf-pack were delirious. They hadn't been given shore-leave, and they were viciously pleased with the idea of squandering their spleen on anyone who could not effectively strike back. Trained to the use of cannon, they had too few occasions for demonstrating their skill to themselves, and here was an ideal opening for complete satisfaction. They toiled like demons, stripped to the waist, smeared with smoke and powder-stains, yelping hoarse admonitions to each other, cheering excitedly to see their shots register.

It was a nightmare scene. 'Bijah had to own to himself—as he had been obliged to in the action with the *Falcon*—that there was an intoxicating quality to such rampant destructiveness.

A boom came from the battlements, and a cannon ball plunged into the river short of the schooner. Stanford laughed on a high, wild note.

"Oh, the damned fool," he shouted. "I knew he'd done it, men. He's traded all his new powder to the blacks. He hasn't anything left in his magazine except old stuff that's damp from the Aimani swamps. Give it to him! Pound him under! Here, Barnaby, what are you doing? Chock up the breech. I want to rake him. Watch for the next flash, and we'll aim for it."

'BIJAH wrested himself free of the spell, and walked behind the smoking guns to the galley. Lew stood in the door.

"Miss Lucy's all right," he said.

"What's goin' on? Thieves fallin' out? But come on in. Ye didn't have a chance to see how we fixed things when ye was here before."

He closed the door after 'Bijah, who was too upset for speech. Two lanterns, swinging from hooks, shed a glow upon an improvished table which held a checker set Lew had whittled in his spare time. Lucy jumped up from a stool, exclaiming:

"Oh, 'Bijah, what are they fighting about?"

"Captain Stanford has decided not to pay his bill," 'Bijah answered. "And the best way to get out of paying your bill is to kill the man you owe it to. . . . Gosh, it looks nice in here."

The galley shone with cleanliness, as bright as Aunt Tabitha's kitchen. Two narrow bunks had been built against the after wall, the upper one concealed by canvas curtains.

"It's goin' to be tarnation hot," Lew said. "But little missy here takes to it like a homesick sailor to his foc'sle. And jedgin' by what I've seed and heard, it's goin' to be a sight more comfortable than the cabin." He grinned toothily. "Only one ain't happy 'bout things is my fiddle. Poor old thing, she'd come apart if I didn't keep her nigh the stove. Have a drink, 'Bije?"

"One," 'Bijah assented. "I have to be on deck. There's no knowing what Stanford will want of me."

"Ye don't take to guns no more'n I do," Lew remarked, proffering him a tin mug. "I'll bet Barnaby is havin' a holiday, though."

'Bijah laughed.

Out on deck the thundering of the schooner's guns was no louder than it had been in the cabin, but it seemed to beat more persistently on the eardrums. And it continued, at a diminishing rate, to be sure, as the men wearied, hour, until the dawn crim forests inland and revealed Sa as a battered, crumbling sh it had been.

Stanford scrutinized the fort through a glass, chuckling to himself.

"Have a look, young feller?" he invited 'Bijah. "No? That's a job well done. Wish the *Falcon's* skipper could see it. He'd hate me worse than ever . . . Peletiah! Lew! A pint of rum all hands round. . . . We're going ashore, men, to round up Negroes. There'll be time to loaf after we get to sea. You're coming with me, Mr. Mayo."

Twenty men, armed with muskets, cutlasses and pistols, were crowded into the barge, and marched up the hillock to the fort.

It was deserted. Bodies were strewn over the parade and in the rooms, but not a living creature remained. Da Costa they found on the floor of his living room without a mark on him.

"Scared to death," Stanford said contemptuously. "Mr. Mayo, I'll leave two men with you while I fetch the slaves from the barracoons. If you can bring yourself to dig out his silver—there should be a chest in the corner room—it will save time. I'm not leaving any more than I can help for B'Goma Nandi."

"Do your own thieving," 'Bijah snapped. "I'll fight for myself, but I draw the line there."

"A very perfect, gentle knight," grinned Stanford. "But it doesn't matter. The men I'm leaving with you won't be so particular. . . . You heard me, Jack, Sandy? There's a chest of silver in that corner room. Carry it down to the pier. This is a prize money job, remember."

"Aye, aye, sir," they acknowledged enthusiastically, not disposed to think too well of 'Bijah for failing to appreciate this extra ration of honey from an unexpected hive.

STANFORD'S depredations were entirely unresisted. A reconnaissance revealed B' Goma Nandi's town deserted, the Futteh king evidently having decided that when white men fell out the

jungle was the safest refuge. Even the slaves of the Portuguese settlement had fled.

Stanford was obliged to have the Negroes from the barracoons row and paddle themselves out to the schooner, work they accepted with complete docility. By the middle of the afternoon the two hundred and fifty he had tagged were stowed away in the hold, each one locked to the leg-irons in spaces approximately six feet long and fifteen inches wide.

And Da Costa's silver was safe in the lazarette with the bags and casks of dollars he had succeeded in not expending.

Only then did Stanford suspend the ferocious burst of energy which had animated him. Weary sailors, satiated with the slaughter and plundering they had been permitted, tramped silently around the capstan, hauling up the kedge and bow-anchor. The headsails were bent, the foresail was unstopped, ready to be set.

His hard features a mask of sweat-streaked grime, the captain looked contentedly around him.

"A good job and handsomely done," he said. "By God, though, I should have collected from B'Goma Nandi for this. No Sirosi, no Da Costa, no Sao Sebastian to hold him in. Mr. Mayo, I'm going below. You take the schooner. Clap on all sail as soon as you pass the bar. Run from any sail you sight. . . . Oh, by the way, what's become of Miss Adams?"

"She's berthing in the galley," 'Bijah answered briefly.

"Well, well, I must see that she's comfortable. Leaving the after-guard, is she? I can't say that's exactly a compliment."

He strolled for'ard, and 'Bijah heard his voice, mockingly deferential.

"So you're leaving us for a while, Miss Adams? I'm desolated. Hasn't my little gesture made an impression on you? This is the *Diana's* last voyage. I'm giving up the Trade, and I imagined it might please you if we destroyed that plague-spot ashore. . . . What? No, no compunctions whatsoever. Da Costa wasn't a gentleman. A very foul person, indeed. . . . You're sure you will be satisfied here with Lew and the good Mr. Mayo? I'm looking forward to a talk with you later. I have plans for the future you might be interested in. You've never lived in Cuba, have you? You must let me tell you about a plantation up Cienfuegos way I have my eye on. A pleasant life, and it could be made to pay."

He strolled back, ignoring 'Bijah, who presently heard him through the open skylight making love to the starry-eyed Estrellita.

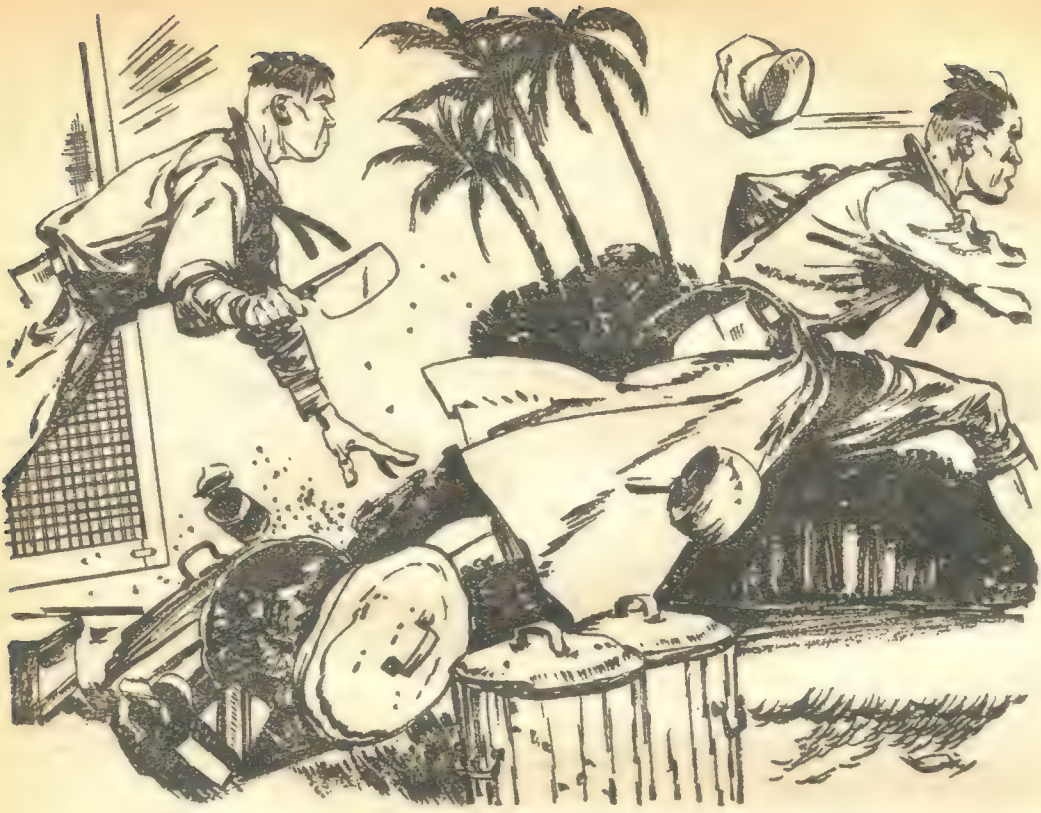
"Little temporary star of my heart, you are going to be a queen for a few weeks. Yes, your reign shall be unchallenged until I grow fickle—as I shall. Ah, I fear you do not quite comprehend me. You imagine I am pledging undying devotion. Perish the thought, Estrellita. Life is not a constant denominator. . . . Peletiah! Damn you, boy, fetch us some brandy. Brandy, not rum, I said. And don't forget the little one's glass. She's learning fast."

'Bijah gritted his teeth.

"Point up," he snarled at the helmsman, who was doing the best he could. "Can't you feel the current drag her to sta'b'd?"

An hour before sunset the *Diana* foamed through the combers of the bar, and stood westward into an empty sea. The dark-green jungle wall of Africa slipped rapidly astern, losing its illusion of topless height, but not its fearsomeness. And the wailing of many voices rose from the hold as the miserable black people experienced their first cradling in the capricious arms of Ocean.

(To be continued)



Terence was about two jumps ahead and goin' strong.

EL TORO, THE BULL

By WILLIAM CHAMBERLAIN

HE WAS a crooked man with a red eye to him, and he came to the table where me and Sergint Molyhan was havin' a beer to wet th' dust of th' evening.

"A good night to ye," he says polite, "and would this chair be occupied now?"

"It was not," Tim tells him, "but I have a feelin' that it is now. Howsoever, set."

" 'Tis reminded I am, sirs, of a night in Panama City," th' crooked one says apropos of nothin' at all. "I was settin' at me table drinkin' me beer when a big gossoon with an ugly face and a derby hat sets himself down by me.

" 'By th' look of ye ye are a tough and fearless man,' he says.

" 'For a truth, I am that,' I says back.

" 'Is it that ye would like to make five thousand pesos?' he inquires of me.

" 'Does a cat wish to catch a mouse?' I tell him.

" 'Beers for me friend here and beers for me,' he counters very polite.

"Th' upshot of it was that two days later I am on me way down th' coast with a forty-foot boat loaded with guns for a crowd of spiggoties that was yearnin' for a change of administration. I was to make delivery at a place called Corazola, collect a bag full of silver dollars an' return to Panama City and a life of sinful ease. Would that be San Miguel that you are drinkin', sirs?"

"It would not," Tim tells him. "It

would be th' best Blue Ribbon that money can buy south of Hongkong."

"Ah!" exclaims th' crooked man. " 'Tis a favorite of mine! Do ye bring me one of th' same, waiter dear."

I caught th' look in Tim Molyhan's eye, but th' tale seemed worth th' hearin', so I tromped hard on Tim's toe and nodded to th' waiter.

"Go on with your yarn," I says.

"Well, to make a long story short, sirs, I brings th' *Nita* into a cove one night, an' at one o'clock to th' dot I showed th' signal—a red light flashed twice and then a white light flashed once—an' prisintly a dark complected man with a face like a horse climbs on deck.

" 'Have ye th' arrums?' he whispers intense.

" 'I have that and ye shall have them —after ye have paid me th' number of spiggoty dollars agreed upon as th' purchase price.'

"With that he fills th' air with language and maybe a hundred little brown devils swarm out of th' jungle and over th' side of th' *Nita*. They was wavin' knives and yellin' in a heathen tongue and 'twas a tense moment for Terence O'Shawn, as ye can well imagine. Waiter darlin', ye can bring me one more of them beers."

Tim Molyhan says short: "And just what does Mrs. O'Shawn's boy Terence do then?"

Th' waiter brings another beer and th' crooked one gulps half of it down and wipes his mouth on th' back of a hairy hand. "Th' O'Shawns are men of valor," he says with a simple dignity.

" 'Ye thievin' heathen,' I tell this head Dago, 'ye would steal this cargo from under me feet, would ye? Th' back of my hand to ye!' and with that I strikes him fair between th' eyes of him.

"Sirs, he went down like he was shot and, in maybe a half a second, th' hundred of them are swarmin' over me. Howsoever, th' smell of battle was deep in th' nostrils of me and I stoops and puts me two hands about th' ankles of this head Dago. 'Tis a powerful man that I am and I swings him about like he was a club. Th' rest falls back discomfited and I could hear them mutter to themselves.

"Says one: 'Such a man must be a God!' "

" 'No other could have such courage!' "

" 'Witness th' strength of his arrum!' "

"Sirs, I tell you that it must have been a grand sight to see!"

THIS Terence O'Shawn finishes his second beer and looks about hopefully. Th' waiter, a sawed-off bit of a man with gray to his whiskers, comes up and stands with his hands on his hips while he squints unfriendly.

"Who is to pay for th' beers?" he asks, pointing a skinny finger.

Tim Molyhan sticks his hands in his pockets and whistles soft between his teeth.

" 'Twill be out of no pocket of mine," he says.

Th' O'Shawn leans back with his eyes reminiscent and a pleased note in his voice. "Th' upshot of it was, sirs, that th' little brown men jabbered betwixt themselves for a little and then they drop their knives an' they come toward me makin' friendly gestures.

" '*Viva, El Toro!*' they says, which I learned afterwards means: 'Long live, th' bull!' It was a name they give me because of my great strength."

"Well can I believe it," [illegible] him, "an' not alone because [illegible] strength of ye!"

"Say," says th' waiter then, "one of ye is going to pay for them two beers or I myself will tear somebody into small pieces and scatter him on th' floor for sawdust! Not for nothing do I run this place!"

"I will have no more part in th' paying for th' two beers than I had in th' drinkin' of them," Tim says with finality, and there is a redness about his neck which betokens trouble. Th' waiter lays a cold,

blue eye on me but I smile and shake my head sorrowful. You see, it had been a pretty lousy yarn that th' O'Shawn had spun, after all.

"So," th' waiter says and he turns his attention to Terence O'Shawn, "I have stood ye another beer, have I, ye red-eyed baboon?"

" 'Twas king they wanted to make me. . . ."

Th' waiter makes a small and gurglin' sound in his throat, and th[illegible] that Terence O'Shawn had b[illegible] in' him all along from th' cc[illegible] eye. This little grandpappy [illegible] doubles up his fist, and th' O'Sua[illegible] would have made two of him, is out of his chair and goin' toward th' door like a bullet. He upsets two tables and steps in one of them brass gobboons on th' way and I cannot recollect havin' ever seen a man move faster.

"And do ye not come back!" th' grandpappy waiter yells after him out into th' night.

"*El Toro!*" Tim says. "Th' courage and th' strength of him is a thing to be wondered at!"

With which, life bein' what it is, we dismiss Terence O'Shawn from th' thoughts of us and fell to discussin' more pleasant subjects—such bein' women and beer and th' chances that th' regimint would be ordered south soon to chase th' little brown *datus* around and about th' hills of Mindanao.

'TWAS three weeks later when th' cap'n calls me into th' orderly room and speaks to me somewhat as follows:

"First Sergint O'Hare, did ye not tell me a week gone that all this outfit needed was a first-class horseshoer to be th' number one throop upon th' rolls and lists of th' army?"

"I did that, sir," says I respectful. "Th' Swede, Christenson, tries hard and is a good and able man, but he does not understand th' ways of a horse."

"Do ye rest easy, First Sergint O'Hare," says th' Old Man. "Heaven has smiled beyond all understandin' upon D Throop. We have been blessed by a recruit who is th' acme of all horseshoers. Ye will find him awaitin' ye in th' orderly room."

Which goes to show how a man can walk blindly to his fate without knowledge of where he is goin', for I went to th' orderly room whistlin' a little tune betwixt th' teeth of me and feelin' that all was good with th' world. An A-Number One horseshoer was all we needed and we would be ready to commit law and order upon th' little brown men to th' south.

I opened th' screen door to th' orderly room and a friendly voice says to me: "A good mornin' to ye, sirs. 'Twas such a mornin'. that I remember once in Panama—"

I am inflicted with a sickish feelin' in th' pit of my stomach, because I know what I am going to see—a crooked man with a reddish cast to his eye. He is sittin' in my chair and smiling nice at me.

My voice comes to me then. "On your feet, Recruit O'Shawn," I says. "Sins I may have, but my punishment is not that I shall stand up while a thus-and-so recruit sits in my chair and grins at me with a face that a hyena would not own. On your feet, Recruit O'Shawn!"

"Why certainly, Sergint," he answers, and I will say for him that he was always polite and respectful. " 'Tis nice that we should meet again in th' same throop and all."

"A matter of opinion," I says sour. "Ye are a horseshoer, Recruit O'Shawn?"

"One of th' best, Sergint. I learned th' trade at me old father's knee, Hivin rest him.

" 'Terence,' he used to say, 'ye are a born horseshoer and ye have a rare way with animals!' I remember once in Colorado—"

"Let be," I told him weary. "Ye will repair to th' picket line, where seven

throop horses now stand lame because of th' misguided efforts of ex-Horseshoer Christenson. If ye are th' horseshoer that ye say ye are nothin' further need be said."

Well, it was a nice mornin' and presently th' beauty of it began to creep into th' bones of me, so that I wondered maybe had I misjudged th' lad. I was not long in learnin' different. Tim Molyhan comes in slammin' th' door behind him and stompin' his boots on th' floor. He pushes his hat back and he puts his hands on his hips and I can see that there is a great trouble troublin

"Do ye feel well, Sergint?" he and gentle.

"Never better, Tim. I thank ; ly for askin'."

"No fever?"

"No fever."

"Then," says Tim, "what in th' name of th' seven ugly little imps do ye mean by sendin' me down that such-and-such of a so-and-so and callin' him a horseshoer?"

I sighed, me bein' an old man and knowin', deep in th' heart of me, that it was goin' to be so.

"Terence O'Shawn?" I ask.

"Th' same," Tim tells me grim. "I am away from th' horse lines when he comes —Corporil Morrison bein' in charge—or I would not have let him get within a miles of them horses.

" 'It is th' new horseshoer that I am,' he says to Corporil Morrison. 'Where is me kit?'

" 'There,' Corporil Morrison says, havin' no more sense than a katydid. 'This outfit has been lookin' for a horseshoer.'

" 'I am th' man,' this O'Shawn menace says.

"Well, ye now have thirteen lame horses instead of sivin. This O'Shawn blight lets Black Bess get a forefoot over th' picket line, and now she's got a rope burn as big as th' palm of your hand. While th' O'Shawn scourge is tryin' to loose Black Bess, Mulcalhey's black mare bites him on th' shoulder. He has one end of th' picket line loose at th' time so he yells and lets it go. When I arrive eighty horses are tangled up in a mess which I have been two hours straightening out, First Sergint O'Hare!"

"Once when I was a boy," I says, "I remember I used to steal green apples out of old Paddy Dugan's orchard. 'Tis th' recompense which is visitin' me now."

I HAD spoke true words, for hat mornin' was just a samle of what was to come.

'Twas a great man in his wn eyes that Terence O'Shawn was, nd he had an imagination which rode ip and down at th' charge. If it was throop drill he had rid with th' Queen's Own in India—and he let his horse kick Trooper Melton and break his leg, not to mention Terence fallin' off that same horse (which was as gentle as an old cow) in front of th' colonel while th' regimint is passin' in review.

I sent him to th' kitchen to peel spuds after that and he told Dooley, who was first cook at th' time, that he had once been second chef at Delmonico's. Dooley was a good little man, but he had an over-fondness for lemon extract and this morning he was feelin' bad.

"Do ye fix up th' slum for th' boys, then," Dooley tells him. "If there is anything unusual that you can do to slum I have not yet heard of it."

"Leave it to me, sirs," th' O'Shawn replies cheerful and so Dooley repairs to his bunk to rest his head, which is painin' him more than somewhat.

Terence hums happily to himself and come evening th' slum is ready. Th' boys is throopin' in, havin' had a hard and tirin' day on th' range, and Terence ladles out th' slum and calls to th' table waiters to take it away.

"There is nothin' like a good old fashioned mulligan to fill out a man's insides after a hard day," says Sergint Tim Molyhan. "Do ye pass it along, Trotter, dear."

He fills his plate and spoons up a big mouthful and sits back to enjoy his chewin'. Then his jaws slow up gradual and his eyes begin to bug out and his face looks like a sunset I once seen down Sulu way. Similar occurrences was takin' place all over th' mess hall. It seems that Dooley has a big can of sulphur for killin' roaches settin' in th' kitchen and Terence has dumped th' whole of it into th' slum under th' mistaken impression that it was seasonin'.

"Try to poison me, will he?" [illegible] when he can get his voice back [illegible] hang his scalp above my [illegible] night!"

There is a big cleaver in th' kitchen which Tim picks up on his way through and th' last we seen of 'em Terence was about two jumps ahead and goin' strong. He could run for a big man.

Well, I was some discouraged after that. I calls Terence into th' office. I talks to him pleasant and I suggest that maybe he will like it better in th' Artillery or th' Quartermaster Corps or some similar non-combatant branch where th' opportunities for disaster ain't so great or th' consequences so calamitous. Th' O'Shawn smiles at me and it was hard to stay mad at him, because th' man had a sunny disposition which nothin' could dent.

"'Tis th' cavalry where th' heart of me is, Sergint. Do ye give me one more trial, for I am a man that learns fast and I will be a great help to ye by and by."

He spoke true words, but I was blind to them at th' time and it was on the tip of th' tongue of me to order him to make out th' transfer papers. Then th' Old Man calls sharp from th' inner office and I leave Terence O'Shawn and go in, salutin' respectful and then standin' at ease, which is th' way of a good first sergint. Th' cap'n is grinnin' and I know that it's come.

"Orders, O'Hare," he says to me. "Th' regimint sails this day a week for Mindanao. Tomorrow we will have a showdown inspection parade, and do ye see to it that th' throop is in th' proper shape to take th' field."

I went out walkin' on air, and didn't even notice that th' O'Shawn was no longer in th' orderly room. Somehow th' word had already gotten around; in th' barriks, men was yellin' at th' top of their lungs and bangin' boots on their blacken boxes and singin':

"Damn, damn, damn th' Insurrectos!" in a way which did a man's heart good to hear. D Throop was a grand outfit in them days.

IT WAS a busy week and then we was ready at last and we marched down th' Luneta with th' fours dressed like th' edge of a rule and th' throop horses steppin' pretty and th' band playin' something scandalous. We loaded into th' transport and some days later we unloaded again and went into camp close to Zamboango for th' purpose of gettin' our ground legs again and conditionin' th' horses a bit before we took off into th' hills to where th' *googoos* were misbehavin' as usual.

Havin' been considerable busy, it wasn't until after we had been in camp close to a week that I had time to think of Terence O'Shawn—nothin' spectacular havin' brought him to my attention in th' interim, so to speak. Then one morning th' Old Man calls me into his tent and there is fire in his eye.

"O'Hare," he barks, "what kind of a young ladies' seminary is this that you're runnin' and callin' a cavalry outfit—th' black lie in your teeth?"

"Maybe th' cap'n will explain, sir."

Cap'n Mulligan holds his head in his hands and groans.

"We will be th' laughing stock of th' army," he says, "and I have had th' shame to go about braggin' about th' soldier boys that I have in me throop! Oh, th' pity of it!"

I knew by then that it was th' O'Shawn again.

"What is it now, sir?" I asks gentle.

"Take him out and shoot him, O'Hare. We're as like as not to be ordered back to Manila for this, as like as not."

"If th' cap'n will explain."

He lifts up his head and groans again.

"Last night," says he, "Old Grundy puts on his best bib and tucker and climbs upon his horse to go visit with th' governor in his palace." Old Grundy is General Brown, who is commandin' th' Department of Mindanao and who is a sudden and irascible man. "It was rainin' last night, Sergint. You may recall?"

"I do, sir," I say, and well do I remember it, for I woke up in bed with a good four inches of water.

"You may recall, too, that Old Grundy would have to ride across a rice paddy, or maybe two, to get to th' governor's palace?"

"Sergint O'Deen bogged down a half a platoon in such a paddy day before yesterday."

"Well," th' cap'n says grimly, "Old Grundy starts across, bein' in a bad temper because of th' rain and because he is of a naturally bad temper anyway. When he is in th' middle of this paddy a voice calls to him thus:

" 'Halt! Who goes there?'

" 'Th' commanding general,' Old Grundy replies.

" 'Dismount, th' commanding general, and advance to be recognized!'

"Old Grundy is sulphurous in his language, sayin' he will be a thus-and-so if he will climb down off his horse and splash through th' mud to satisfy some thimble-witted sentinel! However, this sentry knew his orders—knew 'em perfectly, O'Hare."

"Yes, sir."

In spite of th' consequences I couldn't help feelin' just a bit good that Terence O'Shawn had learned to do one thing right, th' orders for a sentinel being specific, to-wit:

"Th' sentinel will challenge all parties approachin' his post and will halt them thirty paces therefrom. When his challenge has been answered proper he will cause th' challenged party to dismount, if mounted, and advance him to be recognized."

Th' cap'n is going on.

" 'Dismount and advance to be recognized,' says O'Shawn. 'If ye do not I will shoot ye with a bullet in a place where it will do ye practically no good at all, at all.'

"So Old Grundy, not carin' to get killed, dismounts. He splashes through mud up to his knees, First Sergint O'Hare, and his uniform gets filled with rich, smelly slime and his curses dry th' rain off th' trees. O'Shawn peers at him through th' wet. Then:

" 'Pass, friend,' th' O'Shawn says."

"Beggin' th' cap'n's pardon," I interject, "but it is accordin' to th' rules and regulations of war that a sentinel stops them that comes his way—be they generals or be they some lonesome carabao that has strayed away from some Juan Assuncion's house."

"Be ye quiet, O'Hare," th' cap'n tells me. "Ye have not yet heard th' story out. Old Grundy, bein' a soldier above all else, has followed such reasonin' and has become reconciled, so to speak, to droppin' in on th' governor lookin' like he had been rootin' for pennies in a mud bath. He is turnin' back to his horse when a thought strikes him sudden.

" 'Tis my belief that this spot is well inside th' lines. How is it that there should be a sentry post here?'

" 'Oh,' says this thrice benighted O'Shawn, ' 'tis no sentry post here at all, sirs. I am due to go on post tomorrow night out by th' river and tonight I have come out to practice up for it.'

"Take him away, Sergint, and shoot him up against a wall. We'll all be back in Manila doin' pack drill come a week from Tuesday!"

IT MIGHT have come so except for a little *datu* called Amani Lampok, who descended upon a bunch of our lads two nights later. When th' excitement

had cleared away there was new names for th' casualty lists and forty shiny new Krag-Jorgensons had disappeared into th' hills. So th' regimint was ordered out to give chase and inspire th' fear of th' American soldiery upon th' irresponsible heathen.

But first I got rid of Terence O'Shawn —t'would have been like walkin' into a powder factory with a bonfire in your hand to have taken him along.

"Ye are transferrin' to th' Quartermaster Corps," I told him firm. "There ye can do no harm with your hinderforemost way of doin' things, th' Quartermaster Corps bein' specialists in such lines. Th' papers are made out and down ye go tomorrow, where ye can spend th' rest of th' war pourin' beans into a sack."

"On me farm in Ioway I used to raise th' finest beans that ye ever laid eyes upon, Sargint," th' O'Shawn says kind of sad.

I watched him go. He stepped into a can of saddle soap and tipped over a rack of saddles which was dryin' in th' sun as he went. I heard Tim Molyhan's curses howlin' after him.

We moved out quiet before daybreak two mornings after, takin' th' trail toward Lake Lanao, and for th' next two weeks we enjoy ourselves something scandalous bustin' up mud forts and chasin' th' little brown *googoos* in and out of as nasty a country as you would care to see. All hills, with patches of jungle which was like a Turkish bath to ride through, and big slopes of *coogan* grass.

Th' outfit gets brown and hard and it learns to sleep with one eye open and is in th' saddle again before th' daylight of a morning.

There is a friendly Moro with us as a scout and we keep pressin' deeper into th' hills toward a place cal[illegible] where we have good reasor[illegible] that we'll find this Ama[illegible] squattin' behind th' mud w[illegible] fort and cherishin' forty odd Krag-Jorgensons to his bosom, so to speak. Then one day this friendly Moro comes in with a prisoner, a squat and ugly man with a squint to his eye which I did not like. I am present when th' cap'n interrogates him and th' friendly Moro interprets thusly:

"Datu Amani Lampok is in a mud fort maybe two marches up th' valley from where we are now camped. He has not more than forty men with him, and if we slip up quiet and easy in th' early dawn, we can gather him and his rifles in without any trouble whatever."

I told you that this Moro had a nasty squint to his eye. We marched that day and th' next night and an hour before dawn we left th' horses in a patch of jungle and went forward, gentle and easy, with th' squint-eyed Moro leadin' th' way. We spread out into a skirmish line and we squat down into th' grass just as th' gray mist begins to lift a little in th' daybreak. I am beside th' cap'n with th' two Moros on th' left of me.

" 'Tis there," th' cap'n says and, sure enough, one hundred yards ahead there is a mud fort, a big and solid one with a bamboo gate to it.

Th' light grows fast and I look about me and I do not like what I see. We are lyin' in a bowl with hills on th' three sides of us and th' jungle, where we have left th' horses, maybe two hundred yards behind. I am just thinkin' it would be a grand place indeed for an ambush when this squint-eyed Moro lets out a yell—a nasty, mean sort of a yell which curdles th' blood in a man's veins. Before I can do anything about it he has whipped out a knife, which he has had hid about him someplace, and he has pulled it neat across our own Moro's throat. Then he goes boundin' away toward th' fort. Baldy Thine brings him down with a shot from th' hip, but 'tis small satisfaction to our guide, whose head is sliced half from his shoulders.

'Twas a signal, you see, and sudden th' hills about us open up with a hell of

rifle fire. At th' same time th' walls of th' fort begin to blossom with white puffs of powder smoke and I hear th' *whit* of soft nosed bullets against th' rocks. We spread out and take cover, swearin' some because we have not had our coffee yet and it is a chill and gray morning. Still and all, th' situation might be worse. Th' Moros is on th' hills and in th' fort, but if this comes to that, we can still drop back to where th' horses are run our way out.

I AM layin' on th' belly of me shootin' slow an' easy whenever I see a puff of smoke, th' *googoos* being like shadows and able to hide where there's a patch of cover th' size of a man's hand. Th' sun is beginning to come up and drive away th' mist so that we can see clear. All in all, it begins to look like an interestin' morning. Then th' cap'n crawls up beside me and he taps me on th' shoulder. I rest my Krag on my arms easy and listen.

"Do ye not think it queer that there has been no firin' from th' patch of jungle where we left th' horses, O'Hare?" he asks.

I shake my head reassuring, but it is not a pleasant thought. To be cut off from th' horses means that there is no more ammunition than what is in th' belts of th' men, and that is not a good thing with a half a thousand howlin' Moros on th' hills above you and th' rest of th' regimint a good two days march away.

" 'Tis like that these heath[illegible] do not know that th' horse-ho[illegible] there, sir," I says and I know that I am speakin' a lie. Th[illegible] knows it, too.

"Do ye pass th' word along to be sparin' with th' cartridges, Sargint," he says. " 'Tis like that we shall be here for some time."

Th' morning wore on and it got hot and that steady snipin' kept up continuous from th' hills an' the fort. From where I lay I could see that fort plain and I take no shame in mentionin' that, at th' time, I wished it a thousand miles removed. Cunning had gone into th' building of it. Th' walls was twelve feet high with never a hand nor a foot hold and th' gate was closed with good solid bamboo. It would take a bird to get inside.

It was close to four in th' afternoon when Doc Dubreen come crawlin' in—Doc was one of th' boys who had been left with th' horses. He had a big cut in th' shoulder of him and his face was all blood and dirt. We eased him down in th' shelter of a rock and fed him water out of a canteen—warm stuff but Doc was grateful for it.

"They slipped up on us quiet with them long *krises* of theirs," he whispered. "Th' rest is all dead and th' horses gone. I give them th' slip and have been since sun-up crawlin' that three hundred yards."

"I'm thinkin' that th' show has started right," th' cap'n says soft. "Do ye spread th' men out in a circle, O'Hare. I am thinkin', too, that it is indeed a long time that we shall be here."

As I went away, crawlin' easy, I could hear Tim Molyhan swearing. Joe Tarbush had been a particular friend of Tim's and Joe Tarbush was layin' back there where we had left th' horses. Th' sun was droppin' swift toward the ring of hills now.

They left their cover and came at us with a rush at sundown—maybe six hundred of them, all yellin' like a herd of banshees turned loose. Howsoever, we lay tight, firin' careful, and we broke their rush a hundred feet away. They faded back into th' shadows, leavin' fifty or so who would do no more rushin'. Such things are hard on th' ammunition supply, though, and th' belts were three-quarters empty as th' dusk came down.

Th' snipin' went on through th' night, but there were no more rushes. These Moros were not *hermantado* and they had no particular wish to die, not when

they could wait around patient for a while and get themselves a shiny, new Kray-Jorgenson with which to cut future infidels off in th' prime of their youth, so to speak. Just before dawn th' Old Man sends for me. I find him sittin' beside a big rock, chewin' on a chunk of hard bread and spittin' into th' darkness.

"O'Hare," he says, "how many rounds have we got left?"

"Maybe twenty per man, I figure."

"'Tis too few. We shall have to charge th' fort. Inside we can stand 'em off until th' rest of th' regimint comes."

"Sir," I tell him, "if we was mountain goats we could get over that wall—but we ain't."

"There is truth in what you say," he answers me. "When do ye figure that th' regimint will come?"

"Havin' no word from us, they are like to be uneasy and it may be that they'll start at daybreak."

"Then they'll get here in time to give us a decent burial come Friday," th' Old Man says grim.

He stops to listen then, because there is a commotion toward th' south end of th' circle that we are holdin'. Sudden I hear Tim Molyhan sing out low: "Who's there?"

Then I catch th' sound that a shod horse makes and a voice, which I have cause to remember well, says: "'Tis O'Shawn, sirs, with th' ammunition."

I think to myself that I have never heard a sweeter voice in my life as I slip back to where I can see dim figures workin' fast. They are loosin' th' ropes and liftin' down th' square boxes of ammunition which are tied to th' pack saddle. A crooked figure detaches itself and comes up just as th' cap'n joins me.

"Sirs," th' O'Shawn says, "I am sorry but I have found that th' Quartermaster Corps is no place for a fightin' man like meself and so I have come back to join th' old throop and I hope that th' cap'n won't mind."

"Mind!" says th' Old Man. "You are like an angel out of Hivin, O'Shawn! Tell me, how in th' name of th' seven pink cherubims have ye managed to get here?"

"I have been followin' th' throop, sirs," Terrence O'Shawn says. "Th' trail is not a hard one to follow for an old hand like meself. Then my horse goes lame and last night I see this ammunition mule wanderin' back, so I mount up, leavin' th' lame horse, and come on to join th' throop."

"*Allah Akbar,*" the cap'n says and his voice is reverent. "Molyhan, [illegible] break open th' boxes and distr[illegible] hundred rounds to each man."

Tim Molyhan says, and th[illegible] deep bitterness in his voice: "'Tis [illegible] ammunition that he has brought, Cap'n. These boxes are filled with beans entirely."

It was like takin' candy out of th' mouth of a starvin' child and I feel sick and old as I go back to where th' lads are layin' spread out and watchin' th' hills. I remember now that Paddy Dooley has packed his beans in empty cartridge boxes because they are lined with tin and keep th' damp out. It was th' O'Shawn's luck that he should catch a mule loaded so.

"'Tis sorry that I am," Torence O'Shawn has said.

"Quiet," th' Old Man tells him gently. "Ye are a good little man, Terence. Do ye now go out onto th' line with th' rest of th' boys. It comes to my mind that a greater one than I shall judge us all presently."

LATER th' dawn broke misty and gray again and then th' sun came up and th' rocks got hot to th' fingers of us. Th' water was gone so that a man's tongue swelled thick and his lips began to crack across. And, all day long, th' wicked snipin' kept up from th' hills and that mud fort that squatted in front.

Bang-whack! Bang-whack!

Like that. It wears a man down. We spent our cartridges like they was pearls

and rubies, but th' time come when there was no cartridges left in th' belts and all that kept th' little brown men off was th' three or four rounds that was left in th' magazines of th' rifles. Th' sundown comes, then, and th' sides of th' bowl where we lay was stained a wicked red, a color which was unpleasant to look at.

"We cannot last th' night, O'Hare," th' cap'n says to me. "We must storm th' fort. There will be water in there and cartridges, and we can then stand them off until th' regimint comes."

"A hard thing, sir."

"A suicide try," he agrees. "Still, it is better than to lie here and be stuck like pigs in a pen. If we could break th' gate there would be a chance."

"As well try to open a safe with a can opener."

I had paid no attention to th' O'Shawn, but now I see that he has turned around and is lookin' at me. He crawls over then with his big, round face solemn.

"Maybe th' cap'n could blow th' gate down with dynamite," he says and he does not bat an eye.

Th' Old Man says gently to him, like he was speakin' to a little child, "You see, we have got no dynamite, Terence."

"I have always been interested in dynamite," th' O'Shawn says dreamy. "Maybe th' cap'n don't know it, but I used to be a hard rock miner back in Butte, Montana. I was a top-notch man with dynamite."

"I do not doubt that ye were."

Terence goes on: "They was excavatin' for a sewer while I was in th' Quartermaster Corps down in Zamboango, sirs. 'Twas put in charge of th' powder, that I was." While he is talkin' he fishes two yellow cylinders, with a length of fuse attached, out of th' front of his shirt. "When I started to follow th' throop I brung these with me, thinkin' that they might come in handy."

Th' Old Man's face has gotten tight and hard and he stretches out his hand and takes th' dynamite.

"A chance," he says. "A good man might get up there and plant it under th' gate. It will have to be done now whilst there is still enough light to clean out th' fort."

"A chance but a long one," I agree. "A man would have to go acr
dred yards in full view of th
Still, 'tis a chance."

"I'll take it," th' cap'n sa
and grim. "Do ye see that th' boys come in when and if th' gate is down."

My heart is up in th' mouth of me but I lays my hand on his arm.

"Th' cap'n's place is takin' th' boys in, sir," I says. "They're good boys but they need to be showed th' way and they will look to th' cap'n for that. Give me th' dynamite, sir."

Well, it was a queer thing and I have never found out th' satisfactory answer for it. Th' O'Shawn has been sitting there listenin' and now he stretches out his hand—a big paw it was—and he picks up them two sticks of powder quick.

"Sirs," he says confident, "you will let th' O'Shawn do this thing."

I turned quick to look at him, my mouth a little open. Maybe it was because th' light was beginnin' to fade and that hellish red glow was on th' hills again but I had th' feelin' that th' O'Shawn's face had got a little thinner and there was a tight cut to his jaw that I hadn't noticed before.

"You?" asks th' cap'n incredulous.

"It is known to me that I have bragged and I have bungled," th' O'Shawn says quiet. "I have not meant it so, but such things are in me and I have no help against them. This thing I will not bungle. Will th' cap'n let me go?"

I turn to look at th' Old Man's face and sudden I know that he has seen th' same as I.

He is quiet for a long minute and then he nods slow.

"There is a moment that comes to every man," he says kind of soft. "Otherwise we would still be beasties walkin'

about upon th' four legs of us. 'Tis certain death, Terence O'Shawn."

"Will th' cap'n let me go?"

"Aye, and God march beside ye, lad. O'Hare, get th' men ready."

I PASSED th' word along and presintly what was left of th' throop was closin' in and gatherin' itself for th' rush. I could hear th' sound of th' bayonets clacking home against th' locking ring as I crawled back to where th' cap'n waited.

I shook th' O'Shawn by th' hand. "Ye are a soldier, Terence," I said, "and I wish ye luck."

He looked at me queer for a moment. Then he says: "Tall tales I have told, Sergint but—they *did* call me *El Toro* down in Corazola."

With that he stands up and marches steady down the hundred yards to th' gate carrying th' dynamite in his hand. Th' breath was thin and small in all of us as we watched him go. Th' hills had woke up to a hell of sound and th' white cotton puffs was blossomin' steady on top th' walls of th' fort. We could see th' dust jump at his feet, but th' O'Shawn went on steady and unhit, and then he was beneath th' walls and close against th' gate. There was a little spit of light as he lit th' short fuse.

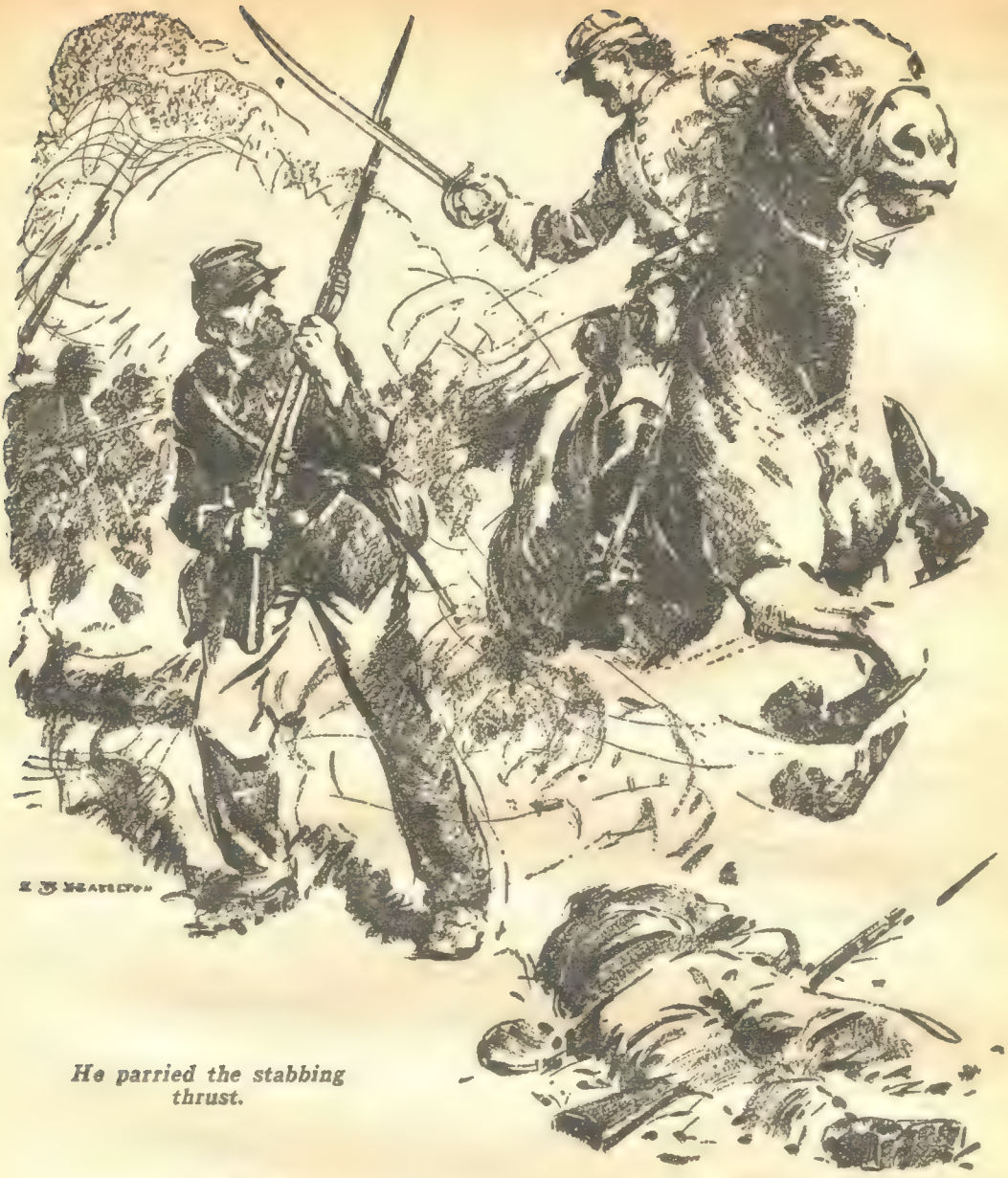
Th' Old Man yells: "Come on, you black sons!" and then we're up with our bayonets bright in front of us as we take that hundred yards at th' charge.

There is a monstrous big *boom*, then, and th' air is full of splintered bamboo and dust, and presently we're through that gap in th' wall, bayin' loud. There wasn't anything that could have stopped us. We cleaned that fort from end to end and we cleaned it well. Then, when th' job is done, we took stock and we found that we had water and cartridges aplenty, so we fixed th' gate and settled down to wait. Ten thousand *googoos* couldn't have jarred us out of there.

Th' regimint come two days later, and presintly we all went back down to Zamboango, takin' Datu Amani Lampok with us along with forty Krag-Jorgensons.

And th' O'Shawn, ye ask?

Perhaps ye heard that clatter a while ago followed by th' mild but efficient cursin' of Sergint Tim Molyhan. 'Twas th' O'Shawn steppin' into a paint bucket. 'Tis well to steer clear of crooked men with a red eye to them.



He parried the stabbing thrust.

"HAVE A SEGAR!"

By H. BEDFORD-JONES

THE three foragers, all New Yorkers of the Army of the Potomac, trudged along more or less contentedly. This afternoon all the rolling country of northern Maryland lay basking in mid-September warmth. In fact, it was almost too warm for comfort.

Malone brought his scuffed brogans to a halt, shoved his battered cap back from his tousled brown thatch, wiped his brow with a gnarled forefinger and flipped off the drops of sweat. A large, shambling man, Malone's baggy blue trousers were wrinkled from last night's

bivouac and muddied by the march; his long infantry coat was belted with cartridge box and bayonet.

An easy-going man, by his drawl; a grave man, for his years; a stubborn man, to judge by the heavy nose and kindly look; a man of camp and field, as evidenced by the weathered, unshaven face whose tan made his simple blue eyes all the bluer.

"Queer, ain't it!" he observed. "Here we be, lock stock and bar'l, from General McClellan down to the canteen sutler and us scouts—and not a Johnny in sight! The whole caboodle have cleaned out to t'other side those mountains."

"What do you reckon lies over there?" Davis leaned on his tall rifle and squinted with bushy-browed black eyes into the west.

"Lee and the Potomac River, I reckon."

"That man Lee certainly hops around lively," said Petrie, the third in the squad. As he reflectively chewed on a twig, the Adam's apple in his turkey neck floated loosely. His stubbled sorrel face was in a pucker. "First he crosses from Virginny to take Maryland and circle down for Washington. He whips us fellers in the mud at Manassas; next he disappears and the papers say he's aiming at Pennsylvany. We cut him off from Washington and he hot-foots it north. First thing we know, he'll be in Philadelphy."

Davis, broad and hairy, grinned widely. "He's sure got the folks in Washington scared! So now Lincoln has sent us Little Mac again, account of Pope getting licked."

"Funny, there ain't been a God-honest Union victory on the main front all the eighteen months this war's been goin' on!" Petrie wagged his head. "It's whang away and fall back to reorganize."

"Well, Abe hopes a lot from Little Mac." Davis spat, and rubbed his matted jowl. "Looks like we're chasing Lee right now, too."

"Like a slow hound on a cold scent," Petrie sniffed. "Little Mac is powerful at gettin' ready. Don't move till he counts every ca'tridge. Our pants are bagged at the knees gettin' ready to jump! And Lee knows it, you bet."

"Well, you listen to me," said Malone, with his amiable drawl. "Being this fur on the look-about, let's go on to that farm yonder and set in the shade and have a smoke. Got any smoking tobacco?"

"Not me; only a piece o' twist," said Petrie. "Those Johnnies chawed this country clean, like locusts and you know that danged sutler's goods are somewheres in the rear yet."

"Gosh!" Malone broke out blankly. "Here we're fighting for Uncle Sam, and all we got is a pinch of crumbs and a piece of twist that tastes like rope, and my pipe's near burned out anyhow. I'd give a dollar for a Pittsburg stogy; Haven't had a segar in a month and more. I'm just plain hungry for a segar. Well, come on!"

The ramshackle farm they had seen now developed into a house with a few out-structures, bordered by neglected fields. To the rear, eastward, were the brick and frame houses of Frederick, the capital of Maryland and headquarters of McClellan. The town was actually an island amid the host of blue, camped at ease.

The landscape was peaceful. The western hills, now swaddled in shadows from the lowering sun, separated army from army; nobody knew what General Lee was up to. He had entered Maryland and had backed out again to the Potomac, leaving the broken Union ranks of Pope to flounder in the mud until McClellan took command.

The farm premises were lifeless and gave no welcome. Everything movable, everything useful to man or beast, had been carried off. Those Johnny Rebs were always ragged, always hungry.

"Durn it!" growled Petrie. "Ever see a fat Johnny?"

"Nope, but I've seen 'em eat," and Davis chuckled. "Only time they get a square meal is when they're captured."

"Well, there's nothing in this house," said Malone. "A cricket would starve to death here. Dang it, I was hoping I might find a butt of some officer's segar!"

"Warm ashes in the fireplace," Petrie observed. "A rear-guard post must have been camped here and lit out just ahead of us."

MALONE strolled from the house into the barnyard, stripped of its fence rails. By the sign, horses had been picketed here. He turned and headed for the gaunt barn, which had a wide doorway front and fear.

He was almost in the entrance, when his roving eye fell upon a twist of grimy, whitish paper. He turned casually and picked it up. By the feel, it was wrapped about a link of sausage or a piece of tallow candle.

He gingerly untwisted the paper. His eyes dilated, his fingers trembled, and he erupted in a lusty whoop of jubilation.

The shout brought startling results. Malone heard a rustle in the barn, a scramble and a clatter. He hastily charged inside, and halted. The straw-dust floating in the air, the disturbed stack—ha! Before his very eyes, a bay horse was bolting through the opposite doorway! He ran forward.

Bay horse. Officer, a young fellow in gray, bent low in the saddle and launched at full gallop. Malone threw up his ready rifle; it was a straight-away shot and a fair mark. The officer turned a boyish face, with a grin and a wave of the hand.

Malone's finger tightened on the trigger, then relaxed, and he lowered the weapon.

Davis and Petrie came through at a heavy run, rifles cocked.

"There he goes! Hey! Why didn't you shoot? What did you yell for?"

Malone grinned. The rider was out of range and spurring hard.

"Well, I got nothing ag'in him personal, have I? Look here, I found something. Boys, I got a segar!"

"Hell! We thought you'd captured a general."

Malone put the cigar to his nose ecstatically.

"I'd rather capture a good segar than General Lee and Stonewall Jackson to boot. I found a twist of paper—look! It had three segars wrapped in it. Two of 'em are mashed. Looks like somebody dropped it and his horse stepped on it. You can have the two for pipe fodder, but I keep the whole one. Ain't busted, ain't hurt a mite. A real segar!"

"Smoke it, then, and shut up about it," advised Petrie.

"Not much!" gloated Malone. "A high grade Virginny. Smell it? You can smell your busted ones. I'll save this for tomorrow. It's Sunday. After dinner I'll have a sure enough Sunday smoke. Back home I always smoked a good segar after Sunday dinner."

"Huh!" Davis grunted. "Think of some Johnny having three good segars on him, when us fellers have to pay the sutler four bits for a roll of plantain leaves out of a fancy box!"

Petrie inspected his share of the takings.

"I'll bet these belonged to a staff officer. Only staff officers would have three segars at once. Like as not, these are out of General Lee's private stock. I bet that young feller dropped 'em. He overslept. We woke him up and he missed his segars, and was layin' low till we left. Then you hollered and jumped him out. What's on that paper?"

"Looks like a piece of a letter." Malone inspected it negligently. "All I care about is my segar. I'll wrap it up again to keep it safe—"

"Here, let's see that paper," demanded Davis. He snatched it and blinked at it. "I need specs. The ink's been sweated on, looks like; all run together—by golly,

it ain't a letter! It's orders of some kind. Looks to be signed by General Lee! Maybe he's certifying them segars weren't stole from him. What d'you say, Tom?"

Petrie craned his long neck. "Orders, all right. Plain enough at the top—General Orders, Headquarters Army of Northern Virginia. Dated September 9, four days back. Say, these were headquarters segars, you bet! That feller was saving 'em up for Sunday."

"It's his misery for being careless, but he can likely get another smoke," Malone observed. "Gimme that paper so I can wrap up this segar."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Davis. "I'll take this paper to the captain; all this writing won't be about three cigars. It's got a lot o' signatures, same as posted orders have. Maybe it tells what Lee's going to do."

"Four days back? Then he's already done it," said Petrie. "Anyhow, we got to get back before supper. I'm hungry."

Davis carefully stowed away the paper. "If it's important, I'll maybe get made a corporal!"

Malone scowled at him. "All right, keep the damned paper, but if this segar busts, I'll take it out on you. I'd rather be a private with a good Sunday segar between my teeth than a corporal without. If I took that paper to the captain he'd make me give him the segar too, so you go ahead."

He carefully tucked the cigar in an inside pocket.

The three marched back in the twilight to the camp lines. There, Davis hustled off to find the captain. Dusk had cloaked the valley and the long lines of fires were all a-twinkle, but the western horizon was sombre and hushed.

Davis came back, joined the other two, ignored their queries, filled his tin cup with coffee, and blew into the steam, bending his bushy brows over the operation.

"Huh! He didn't even say thank you," he grunted. "Took a look at the paper and then bounced out. Reckon he went to find the colonel."

Petrie, sopping hardtack in his coffee, grinned.

"Cap, he takes it to the colonel, the colonel maybe takes it to the general, and the general sends it to headquarters. Then Little Mac finds out what Lee was up to, four days back, and he'll know what to do himself."

"He never moves in a hurry," grunted Malone. "He's a great hand to plan and and get all set. I'll have time for my Sunday segar, all right."

Supper was finished. Th t the fire stuffed their pipes ' g in under blankets. Malor ne pipe fumes; Davis, grinning at m, filled his bowl with the crumbled fragments of the mashed cigar, then applied a coal.

"Better smoke your segar while you got a chance. Captain took off in a hurry."

"Nope. I aim to put in an hour on that segar tomorrow."

"Well, this certainly ain't sutler tobacco! It's prime Virginny."

Malone took to his blanket. His whole being yearned for a real smoke, but there was a warming comfort, a luxurious feeling, in holding off. That cigar would be all the sweeter on the morrow. A smoke like that, the first cigar of any kind in long weeks, was to be smoked at leisure, in the peace of a full stomach, with the smoke wafting into the nostrils and making rings before the eyes, and the ash slowly getting longer in proof that it was prime tobacco.

The nucleus of light in headquarters, two miles away, burned late, seemed to be burning off and on all night—in fact Malone was roused, now and again, by beat of rapid hooves, by couriers racing through the darknes, by distant shouts and dull murmurs, the clank of batteries in motion and jingle of cavalry. Other lights appeared, faintly aflicker, in regimental headquarters tents, and lanterns

bobbed like fireflies along the infantry lines.

Off yonder a lantern stopped at the captain's tent, then moved on again. News of some kind; might have something to do with that piece of paper. Malone yawned at the thought, and his hand strayed to his pocket.

"Have a segar?" he invited, and with a chuckle dozed off to sleep again.

IE was roused by reveille, in he dawn of Sunday. All this ing of the army had been uted out; the men were stumbling about and cursing. Coffee fires blinked up from the embers; lines were formed for roll call. The captain came through the obscurity, buckling on his sword.

"We march in thirty minutes. Have the men fall out for hardtack and coffee."

"What's it all about, cap?" lifted voices.

"Great news, boys! We're off to bag Lee and half his army!"

The three cronies gathered. Davis swore as he gulped his coffee.

"Damnation! In a hell of a hurry all of a sudden, seems like."

"If we get it over early," said Malone, "I'll get to smoke my Sunday segar yet."

The first sergeant came past. Petrie hailed him with demand for news. He halted.

"Lootenant says the cap'n says the colonel says Little Mac has learned that Lee has divided himself up. Sent part his troops to capture Harper's Ferry. We'll bag him."

The sergeant went on. The three exchanged looks.

"Blast it!" said Davis. "It was in that paper, huh? Well, now I'll sure be made a corporal, if we bag Lee."

"Wish I'd never given you the paper," drawled Malone gloomily. "He won't be looking for us, and those Johnnies will fight all day to hold us off. Now, dang it, I'll have to smoke my segar Monday, while we're counting prisoners."

"Fall in! Fall in!" came the orders. The three gobbled hastily and obeyed.

Rifles were grabbed from the stacks, knapsacks were left for the baggage wagons; it was light marching orders. Ranks were formed, rumors ran riot. Lee, with his army cut in two, was to be surprised, while he'd be expecting Little Mac to plan and reconnoiter and fuddle around as usual. Not this time!

Forward under a brightening sky. The broad columns of infantry swung along. The artillery roled after, harness clanking and caissons jolting, then the ambulances and baggage wagons. Little Mac was in a hurry at last and meant business. He had the under holt on Lee this time, you bet! And Lee was somewhere yonder over those hills.

The sun crept up, warm on a man's back, while the haze cleared away from the blue hills. Here was the first high uplift ahead, the Catoctin range, patched with brown and yellow of cultivated fields, dotted with farm buildings.

The column struck into the main road from Frederick. This road had been trampled and littered by another column, in retreat toward the Potomac. There went the Johnnies, here came the Yanks, raising the dust as they footed through the winding pass.

Listen—gunfire! The sharp blasts of cannon echoed from the valley ahead, where the outflung advance was engaged.

"Sounds like we've found 'em," panted Davis, hoofing sturdily along.

"Sooner over with the better," and Malone wiped his sweaty face with his sleeve. "We can rest all day tomorrow. I can just see myself takin' it easy, after dinner, with my segar. I got it wrapped now so's it won't bust."

"You ought to've smoked it last night."

"Not much. Then it'd be gone now,

wouldn't it? Can't rush a thing like that."

The cannon was still echoing. The rattle of muskets joined in the clamor. The mouth of the pass opened and the column surged through into a widening level stretch——another valley backed by a second and higher range of hills. Smoke lazily drifted across the center of the valley, and the firing died down.

"Only a skirmish," yapped Petrie. "Look! There they go!"

A town appeared, nested in the valley ahead. Beyond the drifting powder smoke, a small bevy of troops was scurring for the hills, along a yellow road that headed for a gap in the range. Malone swore heartily, as he heard the exclamations on right and left. Sunday was going to be a busy day after all, and Monday looked none too promising. That cigar had now become a mania with him, and time to enjoy it.

Only a few miles away across the valley, the crests and flanks of the hills glittered with muskets and cannon along a two-mile front, commanding the approaches and closing the road through the pass. He scowled at the situation. He knew who were up there—lean, ragged Virginians, Texans, Carolinans, who yelled like catamounts and fought like devils with ball and bayonet, tooth and nail. He heard Davis speak, matching his sour thought.

"Look at 'em, cocked and primed and a-layin' for us! You won't have time up there for any Sunday segar. I can tell you that."

"That's right," added Petrie. "And if that's Lee with half his army, you can be dead certain old Stonewall Jackson is coming with t'other half."

It seemed that Little Mac was of the same opinion. A group of mounted staff officers were scanning the heights through their glasses. Another column had flowed from a pass to the south. And farther down the valley, masses of blue darkened the autumn fields. Aides were on the gallop hither and back.

Orders, for line of battle, in column of regiments, double ranks. By the right flank, double time, march! Front again. The artillery tore through the intervals with horses at a tugging lope, cannoneers clutching to the bounding caissons, while the snouted guns dragged after after like scorpions' tails.

Near the base of the hills, the batteries wheeled into action. All in a minute, shells were strewing the brown slopes with cotton puffs, and bu[illegible]te bloomed around the guns. Johnnies were throwing t[illegible]s again.

"South Mountain, that's what those hills are called," croaked Davis. "The gap ahead leads on through, but I dunno as I'm curious to see what's on beyond."

Malone tried to spit. No use. That was always the way. A dry mouth just as a man waited to get under fire! In action, he had no mouth except to yell with, had arms and legs alone, and a blistering hot, kicking rifle. He thought of that segar, carefully stowed away, and cursed at the thought of some Johnny smashing it with a gun butt. If he'd left it in his knapsack, some waggoner with a nose for prime Virginny would have ferreted it out. Better as it was.

His gloom vanished. The lines deployed now. The enemy were shooting from above, and the orders came to fire —he was toiling on up the first long slope, he was into it, and everything was a blur of action.

Mid-morning, noon, mid-afternoon, the sun low in the west; to right and left and up ahead, everything was smoke and rattle and yells. A hell of a fight! Hot lead, iron, cold steel; gun butts, fists and bared teeth. These Carolinans were wildcats, but they gave back and back, from one stand to another, leaving a trail of gray behind.

In this chaotic mêlée was little order. Squad fought squad across the broken ground of fields and rocks and brush. Suddenly, in a burst through the smoke,

Malone was aware of an officer, a young fellow on a bay horse, spurring in a rally. Shouting, he wheeled to the front, sword held high and smooth face aflame. A major, by the black braid on his gray sleeves.

Malone, his gun still smoking from the last shot, sprang out with the bayonet to unhorse, to stab, to bring down the quarry, but the youngster was quick and able. He parried the stabbing thrust. His sword rose again, but it was checked. Malone heard a gay, mocking laugh.

"Tit for tat, Yank!"

The bay wheeled and was away. Malone stood staring, dumbfounded. The young fellow of the barn—no wonder that boyish face looked familiar! And to think the fellow had recognized him!

"Well, I'll be damned!" he muttered, and began to reload.

THE waves of reinforcements leared the slopes, the crests nd the gap itself. The line f ridge was taken. Fragments of butternut and gray went flooding down the western slopes to vanish in the darkening shadows of the lower ground.

The regiment camped where it had fired the last shots, high among the fields. Camped thirsty, hungry, worn out. The hospitals were busy. Bivouac fires gleamed redly through the September chill, and men munched emergency rations of hardtack and bacon.

"They had a thundering big rear guard, seems to me," said Davis. "More we fought, the worse we had to fight."

"And we got to bag him tomorrow instead of today," growled Malone. "All your fault, dang it! If it hadn't been for you and that paper, we'd be resting our feet."

"That durned piece of paper!" put in Petrie. "It got us into a mess, all right. The Johnnies were waiting for us. You were too cussed smart."

"I caught sight of that young feller in the battle," said Malone, and told of his astonishing encounter with the young officer. Davis gave him a grin.

"Better smoke that segar tonight, while you got a chance!"

Malone shook his head. "When I'm so tired I can't sit up? I should say not. I aim to take my time on that segar and enjoy it down to the last inch. It's going to be my victory segar. Have a segar to celebrate on, I'll say, like the general gave it to me. Right now I'll make shift with a pipe. Can't waste a prime segar like that on top of hardtack and sowbelly."

Reveille again sounded at earliest dawn, but the brigades were a long time in getting started. There was a good deal of preparation to be made; delayed troops must be brought up and assigned.

Up rose the sun, climbing in haste to see beyond the hills and report what Lee was doing. The azure mists that cloaked the lower ground thinned out. Another pretty valley was disclosed: trees, cornfields, a farm house and yellow roads. Six or eight miles away, a creek wound like a silver thread through patches of woods; Antietam Creek, somebody said it was called. A sprawled town, Sharpsburg, on beyond the creek. And far in the west, a dozen miles by air line, the glint of a river again, the Potomac.

So much Malone gathered. The angle of hilly ridge between the creek and the river broadened in the north. Lee was in that angle.

The valley was strangely quiet. Cocks did not crow after an army had passed through, but dust tinged the air, and dust floated over the far knolls. Davis nodded at it.

"Cannon fire, all right. The Johnnies and our men are still going it. Why the dickens don't we move in and get it over with before Lee gets clear away?"

Malone turned ear to the mutter of cannon, like distant thunder, sh from the south. He made quic

"Listen, it's quitting! Now i They've taken Harper's Ferry are drawing off. Lee's got word to 'em

to come and join him. And you know how those long legged Johnnies can march!"

"Huh! You'll get cheated out o' that victory segar yet!" grunted Davis.

"Nope, not me. We can finish in a day. I'll smoke it tomorrow when we're resting up—hello! Orders coming."

"Here we go!" cried Petrie. The column began to move. "After yesterday's fight I ain't so anxious for another. Say, boys, I had a queer dream last night! Seemed like the war was all over and I was mustered out and going home."

Malone's eyes twinkled as he trudged along.

"Did you see me smoking my segar?"

"That's funny." Petrie gave him a look. "I asked you where that there segar was and you said you'd lost it. I rember right plain about it—"

He stumbled, cursed, and forgot about the dream.

The columns of blue poured through the gaps. The advance was into the first plain; all the eastern side of the valley was dark with infantry and artillery. Then the march hesitated. Columns changed directions, feeling the way.

More delay. Marching and counter marching, as if on parade for the Johnnies. Harper's Ferry was only fifteen miles away. Stonewall Jackson and his limberlegs in tattered gray could cover fifteen miles like a trotter horse. But Little Mac had to get ready, as usual.

Night came, and camp east of the creek. The ranks were in a grumble, almost too exhausted for sleep. No time and place for that segar now, thought Malone. Tomorrow or next day. It was safe enough in his pocket. He was savagely determined on leisure to enjoy it thoroughly, on untroubled mind and rested feet. For tonight, sleep. . . .

IT was the second day of battle. Charge and counter charge, across the rocks and the cornfields, back across the cornfields with their sudden crop of gray and blue. Battle and thunder on the right; now here in the center, now spreading along the front to the left. Guns clanging and roaring. At times the air buzzled with grape and bullets in a crisscross flight of swarming bees.

At last the creek was behind, the ridge was ahead. Jackson had arrived; they knew it now.

The right wing had doubled him up a trifle, but now the right wing was whittled to slivers. The support rushed in too late. The center had troubles of its own. Everyone in this army was too late.

Lee had almost his whole array at last. Troops came in through the smoke, cheering, panting, wolfish for fight. A man with rifle and bayonet did not see much.

But Malone had ears, thickened with the clamor, and they could tell him which way the fight was sur
began to think that Lee was
bagged in a hurry.

A bullet slapped beside him.
to see Petrie pitch forward, clutching at the ground. With a moaning grunt of distress, Malone bent over him, but Petrie was dead already; the Adam's apple in his lean throat was still. One minute alive, the next minute dead. The firing line shouldered on. Malone swore with bitter heat as he caught up with the others.

"Damn! I got it—"

That was Davis, dropping his gun, falling out, staggering away with a clutch at a dangling right arm. Malone glanced after him, cursed afresh, and went on.

The sun was westering. The Rebs were here in a long ditch, a washed-out lane that skirted a sloping cornfield on two sides. Gray and butternut, slouch hats, whiskered faces squinting, a North Carolina battle flag; so much Malone could note.

Then the volleys, the yells between the volleys. The Rebs would not budge, not though New York, New Hampshire,

Pennslyvania flanked them, hemmed them in, drove in with the bayonet, poured balls into them. It made a man sick. Malone stopped his cursing and went on handling his hot weapon, wishing the night would come.

They broke at last, what was left of them. Turned about in the cornfield and charged back, and merged with the smoke. The lane was cluttered like a burial ditch.

Afternoon was dying. The fighting on the right had lulled, the center was at halt, the last shots were fired on the left.

The Johnnies had fallen back but had not given up; they acted as though worn out. And here, still short of Sharpsburg, men threw themselves down like panting dogs.

God, what a day! Victory? Enough to talk about, perhaps. All the space up the slopes beyond the forming bivouacs was gray and blue. Twenty thousand killed or wounded in the fourteen hours, ran the talk; some officer who knew had started it. Searching squads were going out, stumbling about; no litters were to be had.

Malone got up, restless and lonesome. Thought of Petrie sickened him again; he missed Davis. Everybody was too worn out to talk. The segar? To hell with it now. Wait till the sun lifted in the morning.

He thought of Davis, and went wandering off, half in the notion of trying to locate his friend in the twilight, but soon halted. The patient hails of the wounded came from all hands in the gathering dusk; it was an inferno. He circled about, tried to get away from those agonized voices.

As he headed back, he passed a clump of trees on a slope. A gray figure was there in the gathering darkness, sitting propped with shoulders against a tree trunk. Malone glanced at him, looked again, stopped short.

"My gosh, it's you!" he said.

"Hello, Yank!"

It was the young officer of the barn, white, tired—and worse than tired in the gloom, for his gray jacket was crimson and his arms hung lax. But a smile touched his smooth boyish face wanly.

"You're the big fellow again! Got enough fighting today?"

"Got plenty," said Malone. "You hurt bad?"

The boy tried to jest. "I hurt like hell a while back, but it's quit now, so I reckon it's right bad, Yank."

Malone stopped over him, and came erect again, with a low growl of insane, pitiful oaths. This futility was enough to drive a man crazy. He lingered.

"Can't I do something for you, Reb? Need a drink?"

"No, thanks. Had one, before my arms quit work."

"Oh, hell! Wait till I get somebody to help carry you—"

"Look out for your own men, Yank. Anyhow, I'm too comfortable to move, thanks. I may have to wait for a searching party—say, I would like a smoke. Do you happen to have a smoke on you? I'd give anything right now for a real smoke."

Malone stood hesitant for what seemed an age, though it was only a few seconds until his hand moved to his inside pocket. The cigar was firm and whole, perhaps a bit damp with sweat. That wouldn't hurt the flavor.

He could fairly feel the feverish eyes of the young fellow as the cigar came into sight.

Petrie dead and Davis crippled, and many a thousand more, all because of a bit of paper and this very cigar—this very cigar which, he knew well, would not be even half smoked now.

"Have a segar, friend?" Malone laughed a little as he voiced the words.

"By jove! Can you spare it, Yank?"

"Surely, surely. I smoke a pipe, myself. I got no use for cigars at all. You open your mouth, and I'll tuck it in and light it for you—"

A match flared in the gathering dusk.

"A mucker's a mucker. If he's better'n that, let him prove it!"

THE HARD ROCK WAY

By ROBERT E. PINKERTON

KENT CHALMERS lifted the little State halfback and set him on his feet.

"All right?" he asked sympathetically. "You're playing a great game, kid."

The halfback snarled and staggered to the huddle. Over on the Coast bench Jim Maples, line coach, was swearing.

"Good-by Rose Bowl!" he muttered. "Kent'll be kissing 'em next. Yank him, chief."

"Not a mistake yet," Head Coach Horton said dryly.

"Rockne couldn't have taught Chalmers anything, but—lookit!"

State had started what appeared to be a whirling slice off-tackle. It was so unmistakably this that even the State team must have believed it. But Kent Chalmers, at whom the play was aimed, was not in position. He had dropped back and darted across to nab that same little halfback as he broke into the open.

Ninety thousand people gasped and then, friend or foe, burst into a roar of admiration. The little halfback, most

elusive open field runner the West ever saw, had been spewed out of a complicated reverse. Coast's left end and tackle had been sucked in. The secondary had been fooled completely. Center and linemen had slashed through. Kent Chalmers alone had analyzed the play and prevented a probable touchdown.

Once more Kent picked up his small opponent.

"Tough luck," he said amiably. "Next time keep that right heel still before the ball is snapped."

Line Coach Jim Maples squirmed.

"Yank him?" Coach Horton asked with a shrug.

"Oh, I know!" Maples growled. "Ferry boat quarterbacks! But if there was only some way to make Chalmers understand this is football!"

Coast lost, 13 to 7—lost its traditional game and a trip to the Rose Bowl. Jim Maples read the Sunday papers.

"Listen to the experts!" he snorted. "'Kent Chalmers' perfect game at tackle.' 'Saved a Coast rout.' And this Pittsburgh scout saying he never saw such finesse in a lineman. Experts, my eye! But here's something. Girl covering 'color.' The only one to tab Mr. Kent Chalmers."

"Isn't he that nice boy who used to come to talk with you?" Mrs. Maples asked.

"Yeah, and you'll like this. 'Always the gentleman first—modern Sir Galahad—in that rough, tough cyclone of brute force, of grim ferocity and savage determination, his chivalry shone with the pure light of the evening star.'"

"That's exactly what I thought," Mrs. Maples said.

Jim hurled the papers from him.

"How about me?" he roared. "Coaching run o' the mill kids for twelve years. Praying the gods to send me a perfect tackle. And he comes! Kent's big, rangy, can't be hurt. Faster'n an end. And brains! He taught *me* things. If he was anything but a rabbit we'd have won twenty to nothing."

"You can't say—"

"Aw, he's not afraid. He's perfect, I tell you—a perfect machine. I've tried every way to spark him. Insulted him and laughed at him and lied about what opposing teams said of him. Kent's so damned nice he makes me feel like a cur. But I'd hire a band to pipe me into hell if I could see that kid cut loose for thirty minutes with what this girl calls grim ferocity."

Mrs. Maples sensed something of the frustrated artist in this outburst, and it puzzled her, as football always did.

Kent Chalmers did not weep after the game, as did some of his mates. He was not completely exhausted or bruised and aching. He did feel downcast, but he knew he had not been fooled on a single play and he was relieved that the hardship and denial of the season were past. Now he could give full attention to the thing that interested him most.

The dean of the mining school recognized this urge in Kent. The dean had it, for he had found gold where it had been waiting a million years. Only a wife's abhorrence of mining towns kept him on a campus, and if Jim Maples had met defeat, the dean had found compensation.

"I can place you for the summ
said to Kent the next spring.
do some surveying, take samp
experience. Common student st

"That will be great," Kent said eagerly.

The dean did not appear to have heard.

"Ever talk to a ten-day stiff?" he asked. "Know what a real hard rock man thinks of a mining engineer?"

"No, sir."

"We can't teach it. Got to work with them to understand them. The boys who produce! There are phoneys and pilgrims, home guards and Cousin Jacks, but the mine that gets ore to the surface depends on the stiffs."

"I never heard of a stiff," Kent grinned.

"Hard, tough—drinking, fighting, gambling, roving from Idaho to Arizona and from Colorado to California—"

The dean broke off and whirled on Kent.

"But miners!" he burst forth. "A breed apart. Code and viewpoint cuts them off from all others. They have only contempt for most mining engineers. Deep down they have a contempt for all men not quartz miners. But they like best to tackle a job that has balked everyone else. Pride in themselves. You'll admire the stiffs."

Kent caught something of the dean's fervor.

"How do I go about this?" he asked.

"Rustle yourself a job. As a mucker. A president of the United States did when he left college. And are the stiffs proud of him!"

"Can you give the names of—"

"You've got to be on your own. You come from a good family, Chalmers. Background, money—you've never had to work. You'll start as a mucker. Be one. No college stuff. Your name is too well known. Drop the Chalmers. 'Jack Kent'."

IT sounded easy, but when Kent reached the Mother Lode in June no one seemed to want a green hand underground. He tried to act like men who gathered at rustling time, and foremen shook their heads after one look at him.

Desperate from six refusals, Kent went to the Lost Bet mine, swaggered up and announced himself as a mucker.

"We'll prove it quick," the foreman said suspiciously, and the next morning Kent found himself in a drift with a miner.

Pete Maroney was nearly forty. He was shorter than the big tackle, but even in his clumsy steel-toed boots, heavy rubber coat and hard-boiled safety hat, his strong, stocky body revealed itself through quick movements and grim intentness. His face, as Kent caught a glimpse of it beneath the carbide lamp in his hat, did not invite familiarity. Heavy shadows accentuated harsh and truculent features.

When they reached the end of the drift and a heap of rock blasted out by the night shift, Kent laughed.

"I was never in a mine before," he said.

"You ain't fooled anybody about that," Maroney growled.

He was busy with heavy pneumatic drill, drilling steel and other tools, and he worked with swift vigor.

"But I'm going to stay in this one if somebody'll tell me what I'm supposed to do," Kent retorted.

Maroney whirled.

"Want to be a miner?" he demanded.

"I'm going to be one."

"Maybe you will. See that heap o' rock That's muck. You're the mucker. Muck it into the car and push it out to the main drift."

Pete Maroney turned to his own work, drilling a dozen five-foot holes in the face of the drift. But in the middle of the forenoon he stopped.

"Take five, kid," he said, and passed cigarettes.

Kent estimated he had half the muck out.

"There's other things," Pete said.

He explained the duties of mucker, trammer and nipper, and later he showed Kent how to extend air and water lines and lay new track.

"A round's a shift," he said. "You can't do any more. But you can't do any less."

In the days that followed, Pete's casual remarks added to Kent's knowledge. The work did not tax the big tackle's strength and he always had time to help set up the heavy pneumatic drill and to watch the loading of the holes for blasting.

"You learn quick," Pete said one day. "Most muckers are just muckers. You

even seem to know the kind of rock."

Kent did not tell how he knew. Pete had expressed his scorn of those who "learned it out of a book," and Kent valued their association. It was not only that secrets of drilling and blasting various types of rock were being revealed. He sensed a genuine friendliness in Pete's attitude.

And he liked Pete. The man was hard, as the dean had said, but there was real generosity in his helpfulness. Kent glimpsed, too, an unenthralled spirit—a man, working deep in the
the look of an eagle.

So completely was Kent f
his work that a week pass
became conscious of a social order in which he was at the bottom. He did not see that hard rock men gathered in one end of the "stope", or assembly room of the bunkhouse, and that no mucker dared join them. When he took a seat beside Pete in the evening he was unaware of the stiffs' glances.

"Get back where you belong!" a miner snarled one night.

It stung Kent. He had always made friends easily and he felt it to be absurd that laboring men should have social distinctions stronger than in a university.

"They act as if I were scum!" he burst out to Pete.

"A mucker's a mucker," Pete said. "If he's better'n that, let him prove it. The stiffs have proved it—every way. You can always depend on a stiff because he's showed he's good."

"A stiff thinks he's tops, eh?" Kent gibed.

"Don't fool yourself he ain't!" Pete snarled. "He can pull ground. Any kind o' ground. He can hold a job in the highballingest mine in the country. He's good, and he knows it, and if there's anything he hates it's a phoney. Go show you're as good as he is. Shoot your rounds with him. Drink with him. Fight with him. Lick him. Give him the boot and he'll like it. But if you ain't a stiff, keep away. He's got no use for you."

A suppressed passion in Pete's voice awed Kent. But later that day he asked:

"How am I going to be a miner?"

"Get your work done and come watch me," Pete said.

He told of seams and fissures and showed how a skilled miner saved work and powder by so placing and slanting his holes that blasting broke rock cleanly and completely.

PETE let Kent operate his machine. At first he gave directions. One morning he pointed to the face of the drift.

"How we goin' to pull this?" he asked.

The miner on night shift had not broken the rock well.

"Cut holes too straight," Kent said. "Back holes not loaded heavy enough. I'd do it this way."

"Go ahead," Pete grunted.

Kent drilled the cut holes and the breast holes. He decided on the angles and positions.

"You'll make a stiff," Pete grunted.

Kent worked hard to finish his own tasks, but he worked jubilantly. That night, when Pete Bogart, a mucker, suggested that they go down the canyon to a dance hall to celebrate pay day, Kent accepted. Pete's curt praise still sang in his brain.

But he discovered that hard rock men at play maintained the social barriers of the bunkhouse. They gathered in groups, drinking or gambling, even fought only among themselves.

The fighting perplexed Kent. He overheard a trivial argument between two stiffs and was amazed by the swiftness with which it developed into savage combat. Yet he was conscious of an exultant, joyous note in the battle. Neither man gave ground. They slugged and gouged, caring nothing for defense, nothing for the rules of fair play Kent had always believed essential.

Several muckers asked Kent to drink. He ordered beer.

"Take something that'll jolt you," one scoffed.

"I like beer," Kent grinned.

"When you're in Rome, feller—"

Pat Bogart thrust his face close to Kent's. He was half drunk, swaggering, deliberately nasty. Kent turned away, and received a blow on the ear. He turned back, and was clipped on the jaw. Then he was fighting.

Bogart, nearly as big as Kent and older, came swarming in with [illegible] intent to win quickly and by [illegible] Kent had boxed in college ar[illegible] mind demanded form and [illegible] blood was streaming down his [illegible] he had his left out.

Even when he was ready to be the aggressor he found himself smothered by a wild, reckless swinging of rights and lefts. One eye was closing. Training and instincts prompted a planned attack but he could not start. He was aware of a savage grin on Bogart's face and wondered why they had to fight at all.

Bogart eased up only because he was winded. Kent, crouched in the stance taught him by the boxing instructor, was a bit dazed. But he remembered he must lead with his left. When Bogart leaped in, Kent jabbed and stopped the charge. His right whipped across. Bogart went down and out.

Miners and muckers had crowded around.

"Luck," was the verdict. "Just happened to clip him. The big fellow was licked from the start."

Kent slipped outside to a faucet and bathed his face. Someone stopped beside him in the darkness.

"Why didn't you lick that bird?" Pete Maroney demanded.

"No need to fight in the first place," Kent said.

"Long's a man's fighting he ought to make a job of it," Pete retorted disgustedly. "You didn't even try. How you expect to get to be a stiff?"

"But what has it to do with mining?"

"A stiff's got to be tough for his job, ain't he? And if he's strong and in good shape, why shouldn't he prove he's a stiff once in a while? Where's the fun o' living if you ain't all he-man? Kid, I got to take you in hand."

They left the June Rose that night. Kent protested. Getting a job had been difficult.

"You ain't got a job," Pete scoffed. "Muckers will ride you so you'd be fired quick. Besides, you're goin' to rustle as a miner now."

[illegible]

KENT and Pete went north [illegible] o Nevada City. Driving with [illegible] Pete, mingling with stiffs on [illegible] he streets and in saloons, Kent found himself thrilling to this new and exciting life. But doubts came when they started to rustle.

"You picked up handlin' a machine quicker'n any bird I ever saw," Pete said. "Got a feel for rock, too."

"But if I don't shoot my round?"

"They can't do any more'n fire you. Hell, kid! How you suppose any stiff learned?"

The job came easily under Pete's guidance, but being alone at the end of a dark tunnel was far different than having Pete to call upon. Not always knowing how, Kent got his rounds blasted on time.

"But I can't tell how it's pulled!" he exclaimed anxiously in their room. "And this rock is different."

"You'll hear quick enough," Pete said.

When Kent came off shift the next afternoon a stranger was waiting.

"Hey, you phoney!" he exclaimed harshly. "Your round boot-legged yesterday."

Kent did not know what "boot-legged" meant. He could only guess this man was on night shift in his drift.

"What did you expect?" he retorted. "I've been a miner only a week."

"Green, eh?"

"None greener," Kent laughed.

"Why didn't you hunt me up?" the stiff demanded. "Now look! That's

tough ground. You got to load sixteen holes and drill relievers. too! Here! I'll draw it for you."

Each evening he reported how Kent's round had been shot the previous day. Every afternoon a miner "just happened" to enter Kent's drift to oversee and advise. In the "stope" at night hard rock men gave friendly tips and encouragement.

"They're sure a swell bunch!" Kent told Pete.

He was in the upper circle now and could take part in discussions. He learned to be wary, however, for he sensed that these men might resent his background. A heavyweight championship drew their attention. The all-star baseball game in July aroused some argument. Interest in such events seemed natural with such men, and Kent could talk of them, but it was surprise rather than caution that kept him silent when a violent debate broke out over the annual State-Coast contest.

"I didn't know the stiffs cared about football," he said curiously to Pete in their room.

"Don't care about it!" Pete snorted. "Why, one year we had a leased wire to the hoist room and the cager phoned down the plays. There won't be a shift workin' Rose Bowl day."

Kent grinned. "You've no use for learning out of books."

"Ain't football the way stiffs live? A bird cuttin' loose with all he's got, smashin', tearin'—let's off steam like a good fight."

"But the game isn't played that way," Kent objected. "It's keeping cool, knowing your stuff."

"Cool, hell!" Pete jeered. "Look at that little left half o' State's. He rips off them gains because he's a fightin' bearcat. Watch him against Coast this fall."

Each night Kent listened to stiffs who had roamed far and knew mines and methods in eight states. He liked that, for he learned much, but hard rock men at play often puzzled him. When he accompanied them to town on the bimonthly pay days he found that they gambled as recklessly as they fought.

Money meant nothing. Often they were broke. Larry McManigall, a ten-day stiff, drifted in from Col[illegible] rowed five dollars. He ran it [illegible] the bunkhouse stud game, t[illegible] town and pyramided it int[illegible] thousand.

Kent and his friends were borne away for a celebration in which McManigall tried to spend his money as quickly as he had won it. He discovered Kent was drinking beer.

"Bellywash!" he sneered.

Kent grinned. He had found McManigall likable and good-natured, and he remembered the senseless fight with Bogart.

"Drink with the rest of us or you're no stiff!" McManigall commanded.

"I'm only learning to be one," Kent laughed.

McManigall leaned across the table.

"Throw that slop away or drag it!" he snarled.

"You're the host," Kent said amiably as he arose.

He walked out. The stiffs stared in amazement. McManigall jumped up to follow. Pete Maroney pulled him back.

"Don't waste time on a mucker," Pete growled.

A pitiless ostracism swept Kent Chalmers out of the stiffs' end of the "stope" the next night.

"You're yellow!" Pete snarled as he stuffed clothes into a bag to leave the room they shared. "Weight, speed—you could lick all hell. And you run!"

"I like McManigall," Kent said quietly. "He was drunk. There was no need to fight him."

"What's the harm if you did? How else you goin' to know you're a man in a tough world?"

The thrill of mingling with these men who were hard, generous, reckless and considerate was wiped from Kent's life.

It left bitter emptiness, but Pete Maroney's defection brought real sorrow. Kent had found a fine gentleness buried beneath the rough swagger. He had been proud that Pete was his friend.

STUBBORNLY Kent kept at work. But nothing seemed to run smoothly. Irritating delays were frequent. Mucker, nipper and powder monkey were always missing. Several times Kent fired his round only by frenzied effort.

For a week he did not suspect that the stiffs were behind this sabotage. One morning he found the miner on night shift had "backholed" his round, had so fired his shots that the blasted rock, instead of being thrown clear, lay heaped against the breast to block Kent's work.

Kent knew what it meant.

"Driving me out, eh?" he demanded hotly of Pete Maroney that night. "Why?"

"If the stiffs are good enough to work alongside of, they're just as good when they go to pour off a few," Pete retorted. "You're too fancy to drink or fight with 'em."

"I've a right to drink as I please!" Kent flared.

"Where'd you get it? Stiffs earn their rights. Go move some noses over. Blast out an eye or two. Show you're as good a man as ever spit a fuse. Then you can tell the stiffs to go to hell and they'll like it."

The sabotage continued. Kent ignored the fact that football practice was due to start. He had intended to quit a few days early, but now he thought only of remaining to prove his right to work.

"You bums can't make me quit!" he snarled when he met Pete outside the bunkhouse.

"I'm damned!" Pete grinned. "You can get riled up!"

The next morning Kent's machine was choked with fine chips of rock. He lost two hours cleaning it. His air hose was cut. He had been "back-holed" again. The hard rock man never lived who could have shot his round in the face of such obstacles.

"You've dug her deep enough," the shift boss said as four o'clock neared and Kent had not finished drilling.

"You know the stiffs did this to me!" Kent shouted.

The shifter shrugged. "No glory hole's goin' to pay for your provin' it. You can't beat the stiffs."

Kent ate supper alone that night. It was pay day, September 15th, and the miners had left for town. The Coast team had gathered to begin practice, but Kent was aware only that he had been fired from a mine.

He threw luggage into his car, but in town he stopped where the road turned off to Sacramento.

"The stiffs got to have it their way, eh?" he muttered. "Then they'll get it!"

He drove on to Single Jack Doyle's saloon. Pete Maroney and his crowd stood at the bar.

"Beer!" Kent ordered loudly as he stopped near them.

The hard rock men were startled, but quickly they began to move. A big miner knocked the glass from Kent's hand.

"And I'm not beggin' yer pardon," he sneered.

Kent had watched in the mirror. He struck as he whirled, and the miner went down to stay.

Not a man moved. Kent was privileged to grind the unconscious stiff's features loose with a twisting heel.

But the big tackle did not take his advantage. He knew more of the stiffs' code. They fought fairly in one respect. They never ganged on a man. But they sent a succession of battlers against him, kept him fighting until he went down. Now Kent looked into the eyes of the men who had been his friends.

"Who's next?" he demanded harshly.

It caught them off balance.

"And after I've cleaned up the stiffs

I'll take on the muckers," Kent taunted.

"By golly, I guess I blast a round!" Idaho Swede Englund exclaimed as he waddled forward.

IDAHO was short but a long ay through. His round head as buried to the ears in huge oulders. Kent had heard the man was resistless at close quarters.

So he left the bar with a jackrabbit leap. The whole force of his momentum were behind a caught Idaho just above th

Gasping, Idaho staggered whipped rights and lefts to his face. Numbed, the Swede threw up both arms. Kent buried his right in Idaho's waist.

Idaho was not out. He merely sat down and stared stupidly at the floor. Kent went back to the bar.

"Well?" and he glared at the crowd.

"Might as well cut myself a piece o' this pie," drawled Jack Hammer Burke, a big, loosely built man.

He came with easy confidence and a rhythm of movement that were ominous. He fought with flicking fists and dancing feet, and Kent began dogged pursuit of a phantom.

Slashing blows cut an eyebrow and smashed his nose, but he kept boring in until he trapped Jack Hammer between the bar and a table and unleashed a two-handed attack that quickly robbed his opponent of his airy manner. Jack Hammer began to slug, but sullen rage beat through his swinging arms and demanded victory.

Kent was aglow. He felt his strength to be invincible. He kept battering, battering, until a wild swing found empty air.

At the bar Kent wiped the blood from his mouth.

"Next!" he growled.

Larry McManigall jumped into the circle. He was tall, heavy, and he had much of Jack Hammer's skill. Kent was breathing heavily and for the first time he remembered his college boxing instructions. He snapped in light blows, coasted in an effort to regain his breath.

But McManigall wanted action and a quick decision. His big fists wanted to find their meat. Wind whistled through his nose as he charged repeatedly. Once, when Kent danced away, McManigall dropped both arms and cursed him.

Instantly Kent leaped in. McManigall went down, only to bounce up, bore in and flail recklessly. Kent side-stepped and knocked him down again.

Kent dropped in the next flurry. He was dazed as he saw his foe come toward him, but when McManigall lifted a heavy boot, rage swept Kent up and into a wild, slashing attack that did not cease until McManigall was down for good.

Kent staggered as he turned once more to the bar.

"Come on, you phoney!" and he stared at Pete Maroney, last of the group.

Kent's voice proclaimed defiance, and there was little in his heart. His injuries were superficial, but he had fought four big, hard men in quick succession. Football had never exacted such a toll. He could not keep his knees from quivering.

"Think you're a stiff, eh?" Pete sneered. "Then why didn't you put the miners' mark on the faces of them birds? I'll show you how."

Kent knew what Pete means—features smeared beneath a battering heel. But in that moment Kent did not think of disfiguration. He was aware only that he was to be a victim of the stiffs' code, and a great rage swept away all feeling of exhaustion.

"Your feet nailed to the floor?" he snarled as he sprang to meet Maroney.

Kent found himself fighting with a strange ferocity, for he was not frenzied and heedless but cold and shrewd. The dispassion and swift accuracy with which he had always played football were his now, but animated by a remorseless spirit.

For in the big tackle were fused at

last a fine physical equipment and fierce, indomitable will. Strength flowed mysteriously to submerge his weariness. Never had he known such an intoxicating sense of power.

Men watched the struggle in silence. They understood that here was something different. Kent was battered and winded. Yet in each movement of this savage combat he seemed to gain energy. And his was a controlled fury. He would not back down from a frenzied exchange, and yet there was calculation in his every movement.

Fresh and strong, seasoned veteran of countless brawls, Pete Maroney fought with fine mastery and vicious intent. For a time he drove Kent backward. Twice Kent went down, only to jump up swinging. His head snapped back from Pete's blows. A fine red spray hissed from his mouth as body punches found their mark.

Yet weariness, pain and the flaming onslaughts of his adversary could not halt Kent Chalmers. It was new to him, and intoxicating, this ravishment of pitiless will. He felt that he was drunk on the unsuspected excess of his own power. A surge of invincibility swept him into glad bursts of devastating force, into something that gained its end within himself.

And the man who should have been on the floor was carrying the attack. His left jabbed and jabbed in Pete's face. Twice his right, whipping across at close quarters, threatened to tear off the hard rock man's head.

Thus it seemed technically as Pete began to give ground. Blow for blow, that is probably what happened. But no one thought of blows or of skill. Spectators and fighters alike had been gathered up in a tameless spasm of brute violence. In that moment Kent was not conscious of hating Pete Maroney. He knew only a vast, impersonal will to obliterate him.

Pete's blows began to lack steam. Only in his face was there no sign of distress. Valiantly he charged in again. They slugged toe to toe, savagely desperate, and in this paroxysm the end was written plainly. Pete was swinging. Kent was punching straight [illegible] from a body blow. Kent [illegible] across.

The hard rock ma[illegible] sprawled. For a moment [illegible] over him, then toppled across his toe.

THE next afternoon Kent Chalmers walked onto the Coast practice field. Both eyes were black. His face was cut, his nose puffed out of shape.

Jim Maples was about to join the laughing group about Kent when a strange emotion seized him. This boy, though battered, imparted a sense of mastery that was inexplicably thrilling.

"Hi, Chalmers!" Maples said hoarsely. "You've come!"

Coast's entire defensive strategy was altered before the first important game.

"They'll accuse us of playing fifteen men," Coach Horton grinned. "What happened to Chalmers?"

"I don't lift the hood when someone hands me a Rolls Royce," Maples laughed. "Ever see anything like it?"

"I don't even believe it," Horton said. "Only Hefflefinger has done exactly as he pleased in a football game."

Two weeks before the annual battle with State, Kent received a letter.

"We been reading the papers and we ain't dumb," Pete Maroney wrote. "Adding the Chalmers was easy after we saw the pictures of you. All the money in the Mother Lode is on you, kid."

The six tickets allotted to Kent were on their way to Nevada City by return mail. Pete Maroney and Jack Hammer Burke, Larry McManigall and Idaho Swede Englund, Red McKee and Biff Torney, all stiffs and proud of it, sat in the midst of prosperous Coast alumni and their wives when the big day came.

"Give him the boot!" "Gouge out an

eye!" "That's pulling ground, Kent!" "Blast another round like that!"

These, and more, rose in shrill yells and drew hard glances. But the stiffs did not care. They hold themselves as a race apart.

They missed all the beautiful technique of the play at right tackle for Coast, and none of its devastating execution. Kent was everywhere behind the State line, smashing interference as it formed, downing a back as fingers touched the ball, smothering passers, rushing kickers, blocking punts.

But it was more than that. A ravening, tameless force had been unleashed. Skill, coaching, experience, divination of plays, none availed against this resistless power.

On offense, Coast seemed to run always to the left with her star blocking back carrying the ball, and Coast had never been able to run to the left before. Quarter, left half and full back swept out end and half and dumped the tackle, but with them always was a remorseless destroyer who seemed to come from nowhere, who smacked down center and fullback and any other stray player who came across, yet kept his feet to go on and wipe out the safety.

"Chalmers — Chalmers — Chalmers" rumbled from the loud speaker. A million radios echoed the name all afternoon.

State coaches cursed sullenly. Seasoned sports writers crawled illegible notes and shrieked.

The Coast team observed its 27-0 victory in a San Francisco hotel, but the game's hero did not attend. A few blocks away six hard rock men sat about a table in a saloon near Mission and Third Streets and proposed wild and fantastic methods of celebrating. But first of all they wanted to buy Kent Chalmers a drink—whisky, champagne, anything expensive and fitting.

Kent, sitting with them, looked each in the eye with unveiled challenge.

"Soda pop!" he said gruffly.

"Aw, come on, feller!" Jack Hammer Burke pleaded.

"Pop!" Kent snarled.

"And pop it is!" Pete Maroney roared. "A stiff does what he pleases—any time, any place."

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet

IN THE discussion of Peary and Cook that has occupied so much room at the last several Camp-Fires, everyone has been allowed a voice except the man who started it—Ted Leitzell, who wrote "The Adventures of Doctor Cook."

The polar controversy is a complicated subject for a layman, whether reader or editor, and we cannot give space indefinitely to the letters and arguments still coming in. But Mr. Leitzell is entitled to a rebuttal making a round-up of the arguments against his thesis—that Peary did not discover the North Pole, and that Cook did. He sent me a letter, and this letter ran over seven thousand words and had to be cut for presentation here.

When I started my research into the Cook-Peary question I soon found many "facts" about both men which were false. Consequently, I made it a rule to learn the reasons for certain opinions, and to compare the first hand accounts of each man with the first hand accounts of others who had done work in the same field.

For example: When Fitzhugh Green and Donald MacMillan followed Dr. Cook's trail over the sea ice northwest of Svartevoeg in the search for Crocker Land, and found that the land does not exist, they were confirming Cook's earlier observation to the same effect, even though they fail to give him credit. But when either man says Cook was nowhere near the Pole, he is expressing an opinion which needs investigation before acceptance.

MacMillan's reason is that the Eskimos told him Cook had turned south, etc., when only a few miles north of Svartevoeg. This makes it important to find out why MacMillan has given us three highly contradictory versions of where they went. Mr. Levin's letter deals with these, and other, Eskimo stories to some length, but there are other points which I think are important.

When, on September 8, 1909, Peary sent out his first message that the Eskimos said Cook had not gone far to the north, Roald Amundsen snorted,

"I don't give a damn what the Eskimos say. They reckon out what you want to hear and then speak to please a 'good white man.' Only a man like Rasmussen can handle them so as to get the truth." (Rasmussen was half Eskimo, knew the tribe and language intimately.)

Three weeks later, Harry Whitney, the neutral white witness who had been in Greenland when Peary interviewed the natives but who was excluded from the interview, reached Laborador and gave out a long statement. He said the Eskimos had come to him in be-

wilderment after talking with Peary, asking what it was that Peary's men wanted them to say, complaining that they had been shown maps and papers they did not understand.

On September 25, 1909, Knud Rasmussen wrote from Greenland to his wife in Denmark. This letter was published in Europe on October 20, in the Chicago *Tribune* on October 21, and in the *Rosary Magazine* for November, 1909, in an article entitled "Witnesses for Dr. Cook" by U. S. Minister to Denmark, Maurice Egan.

It told how Rasmussen had gone north with Captain Schonbye of the *Good Hope* after leaving Cook in southern Greenland, and of his interview with the Smith Sound Eskimos. Their story confirmed Cook in every way. They could not support him with astronomical observations, of course, they had marched a great distance to the north and had at last reached a place where the sun did not dip at all at night. They told how Cook had danced in delight, when his sun glass showed them only one march from the "Big Nail" and of their bewilderment in finding that conditions at the "Big Nail" were the same as they had been marching through for many days.

In the same article in *Rosary* is the account of an interview with Rasmussen by Axel Pennin. When asked about Peary's statement that the Eskimos had denounced Cook, Rasmussen said he did not know much about it except that Peary said they had not been far from land.

"And that is nonsense," he concluded.

He explained that while Eskimos could not navigate, they knew from the number of marches and from the fatigue of each march approximately how far they had gone. When asked how well he knew Cook, he told of meeting him in August, 1907. Then,

"I only got to know his plans about half a year later when I met him in Etah. He was at that time outgoing, and I had the opportunity then to ascertain that a more sensibly equipped expedition could not possibly be thought of."

He added that the Eskimos believed Cook to be uncommonly capable and of unusual strength and endurance.

Rasmussen later turned against Cook, but that does not in any way alter the strength of this interview with the Eskimos *which was held before Peary had talked to them on his way south.*

Returning to MacMillan: He was present at the Peary interview with Cook's companions from which Whitney was excluded. But MacMillan could not speak their language. Nevertheless, he signed the statement about that interview which was published on October 13, 1909, in newspapers throughout the land, accompanied by a map showing the route Peary says the Eskimos said Cook took. (This statement, incidentally, flatly contradicted the verbal statement Peary had made two weeks earlier.) Since that time MacMillan has published two contradictory versions of the same story, one illustrated by a map in his *How Peary Reached the Pole,* (1934).

Meighen Island raises a very perplexing point. Stefansson says that the only positive evidence against Cook's success is his failure to see this island which Stefason discovered eight years after Cook passed through that region; MacMillan, on the contrary, insists that Cook discovered the island instead of going to the Pole.

When Fitzhugh Green told Mr. Hall that the boys had told him they did not go far north, he was repeating a statement the Eskimos had been coached to make. Green did not know their language, and could not get along with Eskimos. In *Four Years in the White North* (p. 92) MacMillan tells of Green returning to camp alone because,

"Green, inexperienced in the handling of Eskimos, and failing to understand their motives and temperament, had felt it necessary to shoot his companion. Pee-a-wah-to was a faithful assistant . . . He had been my traveling companion from the first, and one of the best. How I hated to tell the mother and five children that the father was not to return."

In assaying these various statements, we find that the one confirming Cook came from Rasmussen, a man who knew the natives and was trusted by them, and who was disappointed because Cook's success had taken a prize he considered snatching for himself. It was based on an interview held before Peary had put any pressure on the boys. Amundsen's disdain for Eskimo evidence against Cook came from a man who also smarted at seeing his goal attained by another, for in 1909 Amundsen was completing plans for a drift across the Polar Basin in the *Fram* with a sledge trip to the Pole as part of his program.

The statements of Peary, MacMillan, Green, et al, are from men who could not speak Eskimo language well, and who had excluded the only neutral witness from their interview with the natives. Essentially, they come from a single source: Peary, who was the "good white man" on whom the natives were dependent for knives and tools.

The worst feature of the whole mess, from Cook's point of view, is that it is so complex nobody could get any idea of it at all without months of research. Any straightforward and impartial analysis of Peary's story is enough to convict him and discredit his claim, but this is not true of Cook's story. Nobody has ever found a major flaw in his account of the Polar journey. There are, however, so many

attacks based on deliberate misquotation, and so many external assaults, that the casual reader is apt to assume "where there's so much smoke there must be some fire."

Mr. Charles H. Miller's letter in the May *Adventure* raises an interesting example of the many attempts to attack Cook's observations. Hugh C. Mitchell of the U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey wrote a letter which was published in the New York *Times* book section on April 21, 1935. The occasion for the letter was not, as Mr. Miller justifiably assumes, because a book was written in defense of Dr. Cook. The book in question was J. Gordon Hayes' *Conquest of the North Pole*, which gives about three pages each to the claims of Cook and Peary. The rest of the space is given to more recent Arctic work, including Stefansson, Mikkelsen, Mylius-Erichsen, Nobile, Byrd, Wegener, Lauge Koch, etc.

Mitchell misquoted Hayes freely, attempted to defend Peary's speed claims without advancing any evidence, and distorted citations advanced by Hayes. Then he said Peary's observations were the only positive proof to show where he was on April 6, 1909, and turned his guns on Cook.

He gives us a profound dissertation on navigation formulae, including the formula

$$2U–2L = 2(U–L) = 2D$$

where U is the upper limb of the sun; L, the lower; and D, the diameter. That formula is perfectly good if anybody should happen to want to find out the sun's diameter.

Mitchell, however, goes on to say,

"But when Dr. Cook reports such an observation he gives what amounts to $2U–2L = U–L = D$. It is as simple as that and as dishonest as that."

This is a very impressive way of showing that Cook didn't know how to take his observations, or that he doctored them. Only, not a word of it is true. Nowhere in his book does Cook seek to find the sun's diameter, nowhere does he use any formula comparable to the one quoted by Mitchell. He works out his latitude in every case by the same procedure used in simple latitude observations anywhere.

When, as in most of his observations, he could observe both upper and lower limbs, he use the formula,

$$\frac{2U + 2L}{2} \text{ — parallax \& refraction = mean altitude.}$$

This is exactly the procedure used by Peary and all other explorers under similar conditions who are working latitude from a noon observation with an artificial horizon.

Mitchell has been connected with the Polar Controversy from the first. In 1910 he was hired by Peary, along with another Coast & Geodetic Survey employee named Duval, to recompute his observations. He testified about his work when the Committee on Naval Affairs was investigating Peary's story. The Congressmen all assumed that he was there in his official capacity—it was not until much later that the superintendent of the Coast & Geodetic Survey admitted Mitchell and Duval were privately employed by Peary.

However, Mitchell did not state, then or at any other time, that the Bartlett observation which is used to support Peary's claim to have reached 87° 47′ before the final dash, is incorrectly reduced.

Instead of adding his instrumental correction to 2L and then dividing by 2 before correcting for parallax, refraction, and semi-diameter, Bartlett applies all of these corrections first. His observation, as reproduced on Page 359 of Peary's *North Pole* reads as follows:

"Obs. Alt. IE	13° 9′ 00″	
	+4 00	(Instrument error)
	13 13 00	
"Ref. & P.	—3 55	(Refraction & Parallax)
	13 9 05	
"Smid.	+16 02	(Semi-diameter)
	13 25 07	
"Ther, Cor + 10	—33	(Correction for Temperture)
	2)13 24 34	
"T. alt.	6 42 17	(True altitude)
	90	
	83 17 43	
	4 29 06	
"Lat. at noon April 1, '09	87° 46′ 49″	(Latitude)

Bartlett applied his corrections before he divided his 2L by 2, thereby cutting their net result in half. His formula amounts to this:

$$\frac{2L + \text{semi-diameter} — \text{parallax \& refraction} — \text{temp. corr.}}{2} = \text{mean alt.}$$

If Bartlett's observation, with the corrections he used, is properly reduced, the resultant latitude is 87° 41′. *This adds six bee line geographic miles to the distance between the famous last camp at 87° 47′ and the pole.*

Nor is that all. According to Matt Henson, in his *Negro at the North Pole*, Bartlett walked

north from camp five or six miles before he took this observation. This would place the last camp still further south, and add five or six miles to Peary's phenomenal, impossible claim.

I'd like to read Mr. Mitchell's explanation of these facts. It may be that Donald MacMillan gives one, for in 1914 he was not permitted to have Bartlett as his ship's captain. He writes, in *Four Years in the White North*, p. 21

"Compelled by the insurance company to select a man with a 'ticket' we had to sacrifice experience in ice navigation to book learning *and a knowledge of finding longitude and latitude.* . . . How I wanted Bob Bartlett!" (My italics.)

Maybe Cook didn't reach the Pole. I can't prove that he did, nor can anybody else. I can't prove that Byrd flew over the Pole, or that Amundsen or Nobile saw it. It is just as impossible as proving that a row boat was at some particular place in the middle of the Pacific ocean on some definite date.

The significant thing about Cook is that his story has stood up to the severest kind of scrutiny, and that no amount of hostile criticism has ever dug up any evidence against him that would stand even cursory examination. On the other hand, every statement of Cook's that has since been checked has been confirmed. He makes no claims to impossible achievement.

In contrast is Peary's story, incredible without considering even the collateral evidence of narratives written by his associates. It does not matter that his book was ghost written, or that he may have let a number of careless misstatements slip in there. His testimony before the sub-committee of the Committee on Naval Affairs is enough. This testimony, by the way, was suppressed for many years, but may be found in the Congressional Record for the First Session of the 64th Congress, Volume 53, Part 14, p. 292 et seq.

Peary testified that he took no observations for either longitude or compass error, and that he had no chart of magnetic variation. That is enough to convict him. Consider:

He started from Cape Columbia without ascertaining its exact longitude. Then he marched in an unknown direction, over sea ice that drifted in all directions, and without once knowing his position, arrived at a pin point goal 413 geographical miles away with an error of less than five miles. And then, he found his trail back miraculously jointed together in a straight line.

When one considers the conditions under which he marched, ranging from blizzards to decent weather, and realizes the geometrical progression with which even a slight error in estimated longitude (hence in time and direction) would throw him off the course, that story makes Joshua's feat of stopping the sun seem like small change magic.

I have often tried to work out some reasonable explanation for this fantastic story. Peary had had a great deal of experience, and it is certain that he would rather have reached the Pole than foisted a fabrication. It doesn't seem possible that the man really did neglect his navigation in this manner. The only clue he gives on compass variation is that the correction at Sheridan was 95°. MacMillan gives another by saying they corrected for 112°. The British Admiralty Chart for 1912 shows 70° at Cape Columbia. When considering the way Dr. Cook checked his position with increasing frequency as he approached the Pole, and the even more meticulous checking of Amundsen on the much easier going of the Antarctic Plateau, it seems incredible that Peary really made an attempt to go the route without any effort to determine his position. But, if he did take observations, and then concealed them, what is the explanation?

It is interesting to note how Peary got his honors. On September 6, 1909, he wirelessed his famous message, "Stars and Stripes nailed to North Pole" from Indian Harbor, Labrador. He then gave no details for several days, but sent messages to every geographic society of consequence in the world. Congratulatory messages poured in by the dozen, long before anybody knew whether Peary had gone to the North Pole on his hands and knees or ridden there on horse back.

Cook's first message had accompanied a three thousand word account of his journey. This was published on September 2. Peary kept the Indian Harbor radio station tied up from September 6 until he finally sent out an account of how he reached the Pole and what he saw. In that three day interval he had plenty of time to study Cook's story. Strangely enough, there are passages in Peary's account that bear a striking similarity to Cook's.

Cook was already under fire when Peary's message of announcement came, and the papers had already headlined his statement that he did not claim pin-point accuracy. Yet, Professor T. C. Chamberlin, head of the geology department at the University of Chicago, challenged Cook for claiming pin-point accuracy, ". . . he could not be satisfied with a quarter mile, or even a hundred feet."

Chamberlin, in a ringing declaration for Peary, turned his guns on Cook in other ways.

"If Dr. Cook really found the Pole," he asks, "why did not Peary, who went along much of the same road, supposedly a year later, run across some of the traces of his predecessor? *Peary nailed the flag to the Pole*

while Cook buried it. That is a big point in Peary's favor. . . ." (My italics.)

I won't blame you for doubting my accuracy on this, but you'll find these very words in the Chicago *Tribune* for September 8, 1909, and if you check up on Chamberlin you will find him just as distinguished in his field as Hobbs, Chester, and Stockwell are in theirs. How a man of his standing could intimate that the ice pack could stand still for a year, or that there was a Pole there for the flag, is beyond me.

Peary's claim was recognized by the National Geographic Society after a committee of Gannett, Tittmann and Chester had announced that they had made a very careful investigation. Their rubber stamp was taken throughout the world as authentic, and in the closing months of 1909 and early months of 1910 Peary was awarded a hat full of medals. No other society saw a line of his data before giving his claim full recognition. Royal, of Britain, gave him a special gold medal only awarded four times before in the society's history. When Peary crossed the Atlantic to receive this award, he took with him his original data and copies of some of his observations. *After* he had received the medal he submitted some of these copies, but never his complete notes.

Henry Gannett and O. H. Tittmann both testified before the committee investigating Peary's claim. Gannett described the casual way in which they had read Peary's journal which bore, he said, "all the earmarks of being the original." He said Chester recomputed Peary's observations while they sat around and chatted. He did not see why Peary needed to have taken longitude observations; all he had to do was steer by compass and the position of the sun at noon. He told the committee that on his final dash Peary had taken two Eskimos, two sledges, and either 32 or 36 dogs; Peary says four Eskimos, four sledges, and forty dogs. He didn't know how Peary took his soundings.

Tittman's only proof that Peary reached the Pole was a series of tidal observations taken along the coast of Grant Land, and a line of soundings to within five miles of the Pole (none of these was completed north of 85° 23′). However he was sure of Peary's success. Bartlett was along to within 140 miles of the Pole and from this point "it was a holiday jaunt to go there . . . it would have been absurd if he had not gone there." In describing Peary's movements near the Pole, he contradicts Peary's story.

Both men reluctantly admitted that Peary's observations could have been faked. They had not interrogated Henson or any other members of the expedition, had not checked up on speed. At one place, Gilbert Grosvenor intervened to tell how long Peary had been on the way, and he got it wrong!

As to Peary's standing as a naval officer: If dentists, professors of mathematics, chaplains, etc. are regular officers, then Peary was. The Corps of Civil Engineers is in the Bureau of Navigation.

The book *Peary* by William Herbert Hobbs was advanced by Mr. Allen as convincing evidence for Peary and against Cook. True enough, the book would seem very convincing to one who did not bother to check the citations.

Hobbs is a distinguished man, has membership in assorted scientific societies, is a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, has written many learned treatises on geology and meteorology, and a very interesting biography of General Wood. But his work on Peary is not quite so perfect.

In April, 1935, he had a letter in *Science* bitterly denouncing Hayes' *Conquest of the North Pole.* I'll refer Mr. Hall to that for a crackerjack example of "ex parte" pleading.

Hobbs takes umbrage at Hayes' statement that all the Royal Geographic saw of Peary's data were some copies.

"The Royal Geographic Society certainly did not expect that Peary's precious *original* records would be sent across the sea," he retorts, ". . . quite satisfied with the copies, they awarded Peary a *Special* Gold Medal. . . " (His italics.)

As I have pointed out, the medal was awarded before they saw a line of Peary's data, and the *original* records did go across the sea with Peary at the time he took over the copies he submitted.

I agree that this particular point is of no great importance, but it illustrates the kind of accuracy shown by Mr. Hobbs. He said in this letter that Congress recommended Peary's elevation from Commander to full Rear Admiral in the United States Navy. Not true. He rips at Hayes for saying Peary did not ride, alleging that Peary rode much of the way. But Peary says he never rode more than five minutes at a time. He says the long marches on sea ice claimed by Peary have many times been exceeded by others. Not true. He says Hayes' book is given over almost entirely to British expeditions. Not true. He says . . . but what's the use?

In *Scientific Monthly* for May, 1935, Mr. Hobbs had another puff for Peary, this time a full fledged article. He says Peary made two double crossings of Greenland and a circuit of the entire North Greenland coast. Neither statement is true. He cites the supporting evidence of Peary's party, but all tell stories very different from Peary's. He said Peary would have taken Bartlett clear to the Pole instead of Henson, but that Bartlett

was a more accurate navigator and it was necessary for him to take the Eskimos back. But Peary told Congress he sent Bartlett back to avoid sharing the honor with another white man. Mr. Hobbs tries to meet criticisms of Peary's impossible speed on unwitnessed marches by fudging on distances. For example, he says that in the six days before Bartlett turned back they averaged about nineteen miles a day as compared with Peary's five marches to the Pole of 26 miles each. That doesn't sound so bad. But, put on a daily basis, and using bee line geographic miles in both cases, it becomes a comparison of eleven miles a day while Bartlett was along with thirty-two after Bartlett turned back.

The book was published in 1936, and is the same sort of job. It is filled with meaningless citations, and answers really embarrassing questions about Peary by ignoring them. It is also very, very careless in the handling of facts.

He lauds Peary's early career without mentioning the dry-dock of Peary's which collapsed. He tries to cover up the egregious blunders of Peary's attempted crossings of Greenland by reproducing three maps in different scale. One is Peary's map showing Independence Bay, Peary Channel, etc. Then comes Freuchen's map of the inner Independence Fjord region, on a much larger scale, and with much of the land that Peary had charted as sea not showing. He does the same with Koch's map, even neglecting to number the meridians and parallels. It would take a careful student of geography to find from Hobbs' dissertation that what Peary showed as east coast was actually two hundred miles from the east coast of Greenland. Also, although he quotes page after page of Peary's writing he neglects to include Peary's claim that from Navy Cliff he could see, stretching away in the distance, the ice fields of the Arctic Ocean.

When it comes to Peary's false claim to Jesup Land which you pointed out in your editorial, Mr. Hobbs has made a little history for us. He publishes a map (p. 216) showing how Peary crossed the Grinnell Land Ice Cap in *1899* and saw Jesup Land. On the same page he publishes Sverdrup's "map of same area."

It is not surprising that he neglects to indicate meridians, and without them his claim for Peary seems plausible. But I cheated on the professor, and pasted a copy of Peary's map from *Farthest North* into my copy of *Peary*, by Hobbs, and followed up by drawing meridians on the maps put in by Hobbs.

What a difference that made! I found that Hobbs had drawn a bulge in the icecap that put its western limit a full degree further west than Peary has it on his map, and that Peary himself went about twenty miles further north and at least two degrees further west than Peary, himself, claimed. From where Peary says he stood, it is at least seven degrees to the nearest point on Heiberg Land. On the sketch map, which Hobbs says Peary drew, "Jesup Land" is shown nearly five degrees east of the nearest coastline of Heiberg Land in the same latitude. The most kindly interpretation that can be given Peary here is that he actually saw some portion of Grant Land, getting his bearings mixed up just a little bit. That hypothesis would explain why the Hobbs-Peary map looks something like a correct map of the region which has been cut apart, had the middle of it removed, and the outer edges fitted together at an angle of thirty or forty degrees.

Hobbs sets out to prove Peary's claim to "Cape Colgate" and "Cape Thomas Hubbard." These points had been charted and named Svartevoeg and Lands Lokk respectively by Sverdrup during his expedition of 1898-1902. They were printed on a large scale map bound into his *New Lands* in 1904.

But on p. 284 of *Peary* is a map captioned, "Map of Grant Land to show gap in coastline before Peary's exploration." (It was in 1906 that Peary went along the west part of the northern coast of Grant Land.) On this map Lands Lokk is not shown. The north end of Heiberg Land is dotted in, with a "Sverdrup's Farthest" shown some distance south of Svartevoeg. Here is land that was discovered, surveyed, and named five years before Peary saw it, but Hobbs insists it was unexplored until Peary came along.

That brings up another bit of irony. There were a few miles of unexplored coast on Grant Land that Peary mapped in detail. Sverdrup, in connecting between his farthest north at Lands Lokk and the limit of exploration at the other end, simply indicated a general coast line in dots. On the most recent maps of both the Canadian Government and *The National Geographic Society*, which fought so bravely for Peary, the coast line has dropped all of Peary's elaborate charting and follows the unknown curve indicated by Sverdrup.

On through the book it is the same way. Peary's claims are proved by citations to Peary's works in books, magazines, or newspapers. The flagrant errors in distance covered by Peary that characterized the *Science* and *Scientific* monthly articles have been toned down. For instance, Hobbs makes a point of the "fact" that on the Polar dash Peary's sledges were only loaded to five hundred pounds as compared with their

standard load of 650, but it was Peary who said that he never loaded over five hundred pounds. Hobbs has the winds come to Peary's aid at the right point, includes an observation that Peary says he did not make, swipes a few extra hours sleep for him, gets Bartlett to land a day ahead of schedule, works in comparisons of marches instead of days (it took Bartlett and Peary each 13 marches to return from Camp Bartlett, but it took Bartlett 17½ days to Peary's 12½, although Peary had just completed his sensational total of 310 bee-line geographic miles in less than eight days).

Hobbs' treatment of Cook is about what one would expect. For example (p. 372)

"In a very large measure the endorsement of Cook at Copenhagen by the well-known explorers Knud Rasmussen and Otto Sverdrup accounts for his immediate acclaim there. *Dr. Rasmussen arrived from Greenland on the ship with Cook,* and though he had not yet seen the Eskimos who were Cook's companions, and though Cook would not co-operate in an attempt to meet them, he temporarily sponsored Cook's claim." (My italics) Then came intimation that Cook had Sverdrup's support because the latter had a quarrel with Peary.

The quotation above is a nice sample of Hobbs' accuracy and of his skill in innuendo. Rasmussen did not return from Greenland at that time. He had talked to the Cape York Eskimos then, however, and it was his letter written two weeks later which is quoted earlier in this letter. The part about Cook's refusal to cooperate is an invention.

Mr. Hobbs goes on to discuss Freuchen and Gibbs without telling that Gibbs' first attack on Cook was based on a poor translation by Freuchen about which the latter admitted, "My knowledge of English was so poor that I gave Gibbs just the opposite impression of what I intended."

There are other striking inaccuracies, no one of any great importance. Hobbs' has Peary radioing the United Press instead of the AP; he says Cook received a Doctor of Science degree instead of a Ph. D; he shows a map of Cook's "alleged" journey and has Cook claiming to have made a net loss of fourteen miles in the three days from March 21 to March 24; he misquotes Harry Whitney; misquotes Cook; cites George Kennan's *Outlook* article which alleged Cook tried to feed his outfit on musk ox flesh; brings up most of the phony charges I have analyzed here; cites a letter of Rasmussen's which really supported Cook, as supporting Peary's exploration.

He seeks to discredit Sverdrup and Amundsen (who were friendly to Cook) in every way possible, even saying, "it was only by accident that the British expedition under Scott had learned that Amundsen was in the Antarctic at all." He even speculates that Scott's discouragement in finding Amundsen's records at the South Pole may have caused his death.

Fitzhugh Green's biography of Peary, although containing many inaccuracies, is an honest book. Green blindly assumes that all of the charges against Cook are true, and accepts Peary's word unquestioningly. However, Green makes no effort to cover up Peary's political chicanery or his harsh, brutal personality. If read in conjunction with Hayes' biography of Peary it gives a reasonably accurate picture of the man.

Were this letter not already far too long, I would like to give considerable attention to Peter Freuchen, whose *Arctic Adventure* was cited by Mr. Hall. Instead, I'll ask you to test my accuracy by running down a few of the citations I have already given, and take my word that Mr. Freuchen has made many errors in his handling of matters pertaining to Cook and Peary.

I had also intended to list a bibliography of source material. Instead, I'll refer those interested in checking on Cook's McKinley ascent to Edwin Swift Balch's *Mt. McKinley and Mountain Climbers' Proofs.* Mr. Balch presents an accurately documented comparison of the accounts of Cook, Browne, Stuck, and Lloyd. Liek and Lindley will be found in the *Sierra Club Bulletin* for February, 1933, and in Volume II, Number 1 of the *American Alpine Journal* for 1933, with an account of their 1932 ascent of McKinley.

To Charles F. Hall, I particularly recommend another Hall, Thomas F. In his *Has the North Pole Been Discovered?* he gives a very well documented analysis of Cook and Peary. I owe him a lot of credit for giving me many leads, and can testify that his citations always turn out to be what he says they are.

Doubleday Doran is now in the process of publishing another Polar book, a complete and up-to-date study of the controversy. I've never seen it, but have a strong feeling that it will be accurate. Why? Because it is written by Andrew Freeman, a man of ability and integrity, and I have yet to find an impartial person with those characteristics who has made an exhaustive study of the controversy without concluding that Peary was an outrageous fraud and Cook the most unjustly abused man in the history of American exploration.

Cordially,
TED LEITZELL.

ASK ADVENTURE

Information you can't get elsewhere

HERE'S looking at you!

Request:—I have a one-cent post card, uncancelled. Left side has a picture of McKinley, with the inscription "postage one cent" above; "1843-McKinley—1901" below. Right side has Eagle with shield for body; thirteen stars above Eagle; banner in mouth of eagle with "E Pluribus Unum" on it.

What is the value of this card, if any?

Cecil E. Fletcher, Molalla, Ore.

Reply by Dr. H. A. Davis:—If the head of McKinley is full faced, it is listed in the standard catalog at $10.00. If in profile, it is valued at twelve cents.

UNDER city pavements lie mementoes of the past.

Request:—While demolishing an old building in New York City last week, I found two old duelling pistols. Apparently they are very old although in pretty fair condition.

They are about eight inches over all. The barrel unscrews from what I suppose would be called the breech mechanism. The hand grip is of wood, very crudely fashioned; the bore, I should judge, is about .40.

They are engraved with a floral design and bear the name "Wiggans, V. Co., London". On the barrel is engraved a woman's face and the numeral *one*.

Can you give me any information of their age, value, etc.?

—Capt. Dave Evans, New York, N. Y.

Reply by "Ol' Man" Wiggins:—I think you have laid hands on a fine pair of English pistols, such as a gentleman of means and station would be apt to have, either as traveling weapons or for the purpose of duelling.

While you mention that the grips are rough, I believe they have been either repaired or replaced, as you state the barrel bears a woman's head stamped in the metal. They have probably been a rather expensive pair when made up, and I judge, must antedate the advent of the revolver by some time.

Bannermans, 501 Broadway, of your city, are dealers in antique arms of all sorts, and might make you an offer, though I can't guess what.

I have seen the name Wiggans on some old English firearms in years past, but can't claim any relationship; my name is spelled with a "i", and came from Dublin and Denegal, anyhow, not England. My lists of old English gunmakers fail to show the name "Wiggans", however.

THE flying Marines are picked men.

Request:—I am sixteen years old and in the fourth year of High School. I am taking a general course. When I am through school I want to fly for the Army, Navy, or for the Marines. Has the U. S. Marine Corps an air corps? Does one have to be a "West

Pointer" to fly for the Marines? I understand there is a competitive examination to be passed. Will you give me information about all these points?

M. R., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Reply by Major F. W. Hopkins:—Each year a few regular non-commissioned officers and the necessary young officers are trained as pilots at the Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Fla. The Marine Corps has no separate aviation branch, all aviation personnel being assigned that duty from the line, and the entire air service of the Corps operates as an integral part of Naval Aviation.

Each year, certain young men are selected from applications, enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve. They must be over eighteen, less than twenty-seven, U. S. citizens, and unmarried, able to pass the physical examination, and agree to serve at least one year after being commissioned as Second Lieutenant. Must be college graduates and be selected by the commanding officer of one of the various Naval Reserve or Marine Corps Reserve aviation units for training. Preference will be given those who have completed ground training in Naval or Marine Aviation units or accredited university. Physical examination must be by Naval Flight surgeon. *No waivers will be granted.* All student reserve aviators will be enlisted in the MCR as privates, appointed privates first class, and detailed for aviation duty. They will be ordered to the nearest Naval Aviation base for training and equipped with uniforms, etc. After preliminary training, those failing will be dropped, those passing will be sent to Pensacola for advanced training. Upon successful completion of this training those passing will be commissioned as Second Lieutenants, MCR, and placed on duty for one or more years. They then revert to inactive status as officers of the MCR and go into civil life.

Full and complete details will be furnished upon application at nearest Marine Corps Recruiting station, or inquiry may be made of your Postmaster.

AGED in the wood—

Request:—I have secured several pieces of osage orange wood suitable for making a bow, but the wood needs seasoning. How long should I let it season, and should it season in the log?

Emerson Batdorff, Akron, Ohio.

Reply by Mr. Earl B. Powell:—You ought to let Osage Orange season at least eight or nine months before trying to work it. The longer the better. It is best to season it in the log for about three months, taking care to paint the ends of the log to prevent end checking.

After about three months, work the log into staves and shellac them. Let them season in the stave for about six months, keeping them in a cool, dry place.

FEET need seasoning, too.

Request:—What treatment do you recommend for the feet of a person who has not done a great deal of walking, but who is going on a hunting or fishing trip, and wants to harden them up?

The tote roads in Maine are rocky and up and down hill. For a person who does not get a great deal of walking between times, a five to ten mile tote seems to be felt most in the feet.

I will be glad to have your advice.

E. H. Bucy, Stamford, Conn.

Reply by Dr. C. P. Fordyce:—The best way to toughen the skin of the feet is by soaking in salt solution. Weston, one of the greatest hikers, soaked his feet in the coarse salt used in ice cream making, using about four ounces to a gallon of water.

Other tissues than skin tissue are tender in walking over rough places, so the experienced walker wears one or two pairs of heavy wool socks (or one pair with thick insoles) and gets his boots big enough to allow free foot action.

A HANDY boat to sail and handy to haul.

Request:—I am interested in getting plans of a light 15 ft. boat that is (a) Fair under sail and fair going to windward. (A good part of the season here the winds go down the coast; fine going before the wind, but tough beating back) (b) A boat that can be landed in moderate surf. (We have few harbors here but lots of sandy beach.) (c) A boat that can use an outboard for calms, but preferably a light air-cooled inboard.

The flat bottom dory such as is seen here is a poor sailor and pounds heading into the sea.

No doubt there is such a boat used by fishermen of the east coast in shoal water, that has been proven seaworthy.

H. L. Thomson, Los Angeles, Calif.

Reply by Mr. A. R. Knauer:—There are several small centerboard boats which have been successful in various localities. The Snipe, Moth, Comet and Suicide Classes are typical examples. The various dinghies that have been developed might also be satisfactory for your requirements as I imagine the boat would have to be carried beyond the high water line. The new fourteen foot "International" built by Wright-Built Boat Company, Dundee, N. Y., is an exceptionally smart sailor.

Most any of the above boats will handle smartly, but naturally will not go to weather in a sea as well as heavier keel boats. It seems to me a dinghy would be far better in the surf than any of the others. An outboard motor is by far your best bet for auxiliary power. This also would mean that you would not be dragging a wheel while sailing, nor would you have to worry when pulling the boat onto the beach. It would also be easier to transport from one place to another, either by trailer or automobile.

THERE are homesteads open in Canada.

Request:—I would like some information on British Columbia, regarding homesteading, mining claims, and the timber rights.

Can an American take up a homestead? If so, does he get water and timber rights after he has proved up?

J. H. Brown, Bellflower, Calif.

Reply by Mr. C. P. Plowden:—In British Columbia you can get one hundred and sixty acres of land free by doing a reasonable amount of development upon it and putting in reasonable residence.

You get full use of it when you take up, and get a free grant after three years when you have to state intention of becoming a British citizen. This naturally gives you the timber and water rights. As regards mining you have to take out miner's license for $5, which gives the right of prospecting. When you find anything you stake and after doing reasonable work get a free grant. All very simple, isn't it?

By writing to Government Information, Government Buildings, Victoria, they will send you printed and full details also where land is open. Of this there is plenty, but your success depends upon careful selection with full regard to soil, water, and market access.

Entry into Canada only depends upon satisfying the authorities that you are not likely to become a public charge—that is, that you have funds to give yourself a fair start. Water rights are of little consequence as there is so much here. You will find that being an American is no drawback as we are such near neighbors. You will have a very hearty welcome and assistance.

THINK of a fluttering leaf—then cast that line.

Request:—Would you be so kind as to forward me information on the technique, types of baits, recommendations for certain fish; on fly and bait casting?

This is my first Ask Adventure in twenty years of reading and while I am fairly efficient in plug casting I would like information from a recognized authority, with the purpose of increasing my efficiency.

James H. Clark, Rahway, N. J.

Reply by Mr. "Ozark Ripley" Thompson:—All the types of plugs on the market are efficient. I use the underwater most everywhere. But when fish are in shallows or back in weed beds, or when casting at night, I use the surface plugs, especially the one of light wood with spinners at both ends. I reel, stop, and reel again in a jerky fashion to cause considerable fuss. Ordinarily I exercise the greatest caution with the underwater plugs, keeping well out of sight and casting entirely with a wrist movement and the spring of the rod. It is very easy. Offtimes when fish will not strike the instant the bait hits the water, I let it rest on the surface a few seconds before reeling. With metal wobbling and pork rind baits I use what is called the silent cast—a side wrist movement and stop the reel with my thumb when the lure is about four feet above the water. My favorite plug everywhere is the bass-oreno for most all game fishes.

I have great success fly fishing for bass with the cork bodied bugs. I cast long distances and never let line slap water. When bug touches the water I let it rest about seven seconds before attempting the pickup. Just about that time Mr. Bass has overcome all suspicion and hits the lure. They must be struck instantly as they have such a tender mouth they can eject a bait much quicker than trout. With standard pattern flies I use a twelve foot leader and fish just like you would with nymph flies for trout, letting the fly go to the bottom and recovering it slowly in a jerky fashion like a fluttering leaf. I also use standard pattern flies with a small No. 0 or No. 1 spinner when water is murky,

not moving it too fast, so that it will look like a crippled minnow.

In bait casting do not use too heavy lines. They are not so easy to thumb as fine lines and after all your line is no stronger than the tip of your rod. I use entirely a wrist movement and whippy rod bait casting. So let the rod do it all, as it were, never exerting myself trying force to get lure out, which is usually the cause of backlashes.

Again in all fly fishing and bait casting, keep out of sight, do not create disturbances. If you do, wait until they have subsided before you resume casting. In fly casting keep arm close to the body and use the forearm mostly and learn timing of each movement perfectly.

SHIPPING horseflesh in mass is cheaper than freighting one horse.

Request:—I have heard that dealers can buy western horses from the plains. Can you tell me how much they cost, and can you give me the name of some one out west having them for sale? Eastern dealers won't tell me where they get their horses.

—T. Smith, Albany, N. Y.

Reply by Major R. E. Dupuy:—In answer to your letter with reference to western horses, I might state that horses are raised extensively in most of the states west of the Mississippi River. These animals are not wild horses, but the product of careful breeding, and at the ranch, as normally ready for shipment—which means trained only to the extent that they have been under saddle and have been bridled several times—will stand the individual about one hundred dollars as a minimum. Trained animals are much more expensive.

Animals for sale to eastern horse dealers are shipped in carload lots, thereby obtaining substantial reduction in railroad fare. The simplest approximation is a minimum of two cents per pound of horse flesh. The average riding horse weighs one thousand pounds.

To ship an individual horse would be very expensive. It would necessitate the use of one freight car, and an attendant whose fare would have to be paid in addition to the freight charges. Forage would also have to be provided by the shipper, and to protect himself he should also take out insurance. The shipping expenses alone would thus come to a total probably equalling the retail price of the animal as purchased from an eastern dealer. Furthermore, the purchase of a horse, sight unseen, is a most hazardous performance.

I cannot recommend any particular western breeder, and would advise you to contact an eastern dealer.

LEATHER cannons? They weren't so rare as we thought. Here's a letter from a comrade in Mobile, Alabama, who unfortunately forgot to sign his name.

About ten years ago I had the good fortune to see two such guns. At that time I was doing a great deal of traveling, especially through Germany, and spent many a rainy day haunting museums both large and small. On some such day either in the great museum at Nuremberg or in the Military Museum at Berlin I found these strange old cannon. They are of an entirely different type from those described as being in the Katmandre Museum in India. Those were more on the order of mortars than cannon. These guns I have in mind are fully six feet long and not over ten inches in diameter at the touch holes. They are mounted on low wooden carriages and the muzzle elevation can be easily raised or lowered by blocking up to the desired height. One gun is reinforced with flat iron bars running its entire length and securely held in place by many turns of leather bindings. The other shows no signs of such reinforcement and the barrel is slightly flexible. The bore of both guns is about two inches in diameter, and they fired round balls of a like size carved from some hard stone.

FOLLOWING an old discussion in *Ask Adventure* of the gold cache on Oak Island, we hear from Leslie Eugene Dennison who has his information through courtesy of the Canadian Press. Comrade Dennison lives in Boston and is former historian and post commander of the National Society, Army of Philippines.

The seventh Oak Island treasure company to organize since 1795 to attempt to penetrate into the "money pit" where the pirate cache of Captain Kidd is locally reputed to be buried 153 feet underground is now bringing into play modern electrical mining equipment.

Frederick R. Krupp, engineer from Scranton, Pa., is directing the efforts of the seventh treasure company in its battle to overcome

(Continued on page 141)

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Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing or for employment.

★*(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon.)*

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure.*

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure.*

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Boxing—CAPT. JEAN V. GROMBACH, 113 W. 57th St., N. Y. C.

Canoeing: *paddling, sailing, cruising, regattas*—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 603 Brainard Av., Libertyville, Ill.

Dogs—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care of *Adventure.*

Fencing—CAPT. JEAN V. GROMBACH, 113 W. 57th St., N. Y. C.

First Aid—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure.*

Fishing: *fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait; camping outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN B. THOMPSON, (Ozark Ripley), care of *Adventure.*

Fishing: *salt water; bottom fishing, surf casting, trolling; equipment and locations.* C. BLACKBURN MILLER, care of *Adventure.*

Football—JOHN B. FOSTER, care of *Adventure.*

Globe-trotting and vagabonding—ROBERT SPIERS-BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure.*

Health Building Activities, Hiking — DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure.*

Horses: *care, training of horses in general; jumping; and polo; the cavalry arm*—MAJOR R. ERNEST DUPUY, care of *Adventure.*

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motor Camping and Trailer Camping — MAJOR CHAS. G. PERCIVAL, M.D., 152 W. 65th St., N. Y. C.

Motorcycling—*regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, 161 Ferguson Av., Burlington, Vt.

Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 1632 So. Hayworth Av., Los Angeles, Calif.

Old-Time Sailoring—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. No 3, Box 69, Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns:*foreign and American makes; wing shooting*—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care of *Adventure.*

★**Skiing and Snowshoeing**—W. H. PRICE, 3436 Mance St., Montreal, Quebec.

Small Boating: *skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

Stamps—DR. H. A. DAVIS, The American Philatelic Society, 3421 Colfax Av., Denver, Colo.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y. C.

Swords: *spears, pole arms and armor*—CAPT. R. E. GARDNER, 980 Northwest Blvd., Columbus, Ohio.

Tournament Fly and Bait Casting—H. B. STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—CHARLES B. CRANFORD, County Office Bldg., Recreation Comm., White Plains, N. Y.

Yachting—A. R. KNAUER, 2722 E. 75th Pl., Chicago, Ill.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American; north of the Panama Canal; customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Automobiles and Aircraft Engines: *design, operation and maintenance*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care of *Adventure.*

Aviation: *airplanes, airships, airways and landing fields, contests, aero clubs, insurance, laws, licenses, operating data, schools, foreign activities, publications, parachutes, gliders*—MAJOR FALK HARMEL, 709 Longfellow St., Washington, D. C.

Big Game Hunting: *guides and equipment*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Entomology: *insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Pa.

Ethnology: (*Eskimo*)—VICTOR SHAW, 20th & W. Garfield Sts., Seattle, Wash.

Forestry: *in the United States; national forests of the Rocky Mountain States*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Tropical Forestry: *tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, Chapel Hill, N. C.

Herpetology: *reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure.*

Marine Architecture: *ship modeling*—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Av., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mining: *territory anywhere in North America, Mining law, prospecting outfitting; any mineral, metallic or nonmetallic*—VICTOR SHAW, 20th & W. Garfield Sts., Seattle, Wash.

Motor Vehicles: *operation, legislative restrictions and traffic*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care of *Adventure.*

Ornithology: *birds; their habits and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 3508 Kings College Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

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(Continued from page 138)

the Atlantic tides which the ingenious men—whether Kidd's or others—who buried this most mysterious of all treasures harnessed in a remarkable engineering feat that has baffled Oak Island treasure hunters for 142 years.

The shaft which is being sunk by Krupp in his efforts to reach the "money pit" is the 29th to have been put down since three Nova Scotia woodsmen landed their canoe on Oak Island in September of 1795 and were attracted to the treasure shaft by a mysteriously hewn oak. The three men spent their lives digging for the treasure. Seven treasure syndicates followed in their footsteps, and have spent upwards of $500,000 only to be thwarted by the tides which drive water into every shaft.

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The second treasure company to seek the wealth of this small island in Mahone Bay, on Nova Scotia's beautiful south shore, came upon a stone mysteriously inscribed at 90 feet. This has since been thought to have been a warning to those who knew the secret that the next oak floor contained the tide trap which would flood the workings, for when they bored through the wood the water immediately rose 60 feet.

The stone has since been lost but it was to form a sponge that would absorb water and permit it to trickle into the tunnel to the "money pit" without allowing the tides to ravage the treasure and cut a channel through the island.

Efforts are also on foot to trace the actual source of the cache, which Krupp believes to have been of pirate origin. Much work was necessary to lay the tide trap which required the reconstruction of 145 feet of beach and its matting with fibre identified as coconut husk known to have been in Halifax i[illegible] se[illegible] being made for it. [illegible] lisputing the Capta[illegible] en[illegible] igees of the French bu[illegible] asure and another th[illegible] f an unsuccessful Halifax in 1745 was responsible, having buried the treasure after the defeat of the fleet and then having been lost at sea.

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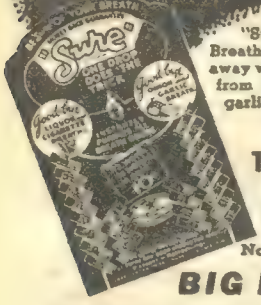

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"Outside the Law," a novelette by Henry Herbert Knibbs, wherein Tonto Charlie returns to pay a debt to Young Hardesty, and deal out payment in other coin to a sheriff's posse.

In the Same Issue

"Free to Run," a story of Africa by Gordon MacCreagh; a novelette by W. Bertrand Sinclair about the salmon trollers of Puget Sound, and of a tough city fugitive who learned from a Norwegian mate about the tougher ways of the sea. Allen Villiers, who wrote "Grain Ship," etc., gives us an unusual article, "Little Ships Are Safest;" and "'Bijah and the *Diana* sail from B'Goma Nandi and Africa to yet more dangerous courses in the fourth installment of Arthur Howden Smith's "The Dead Go Overside."

These and other good stories will appear in the July issue of

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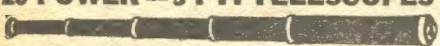

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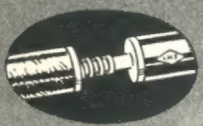

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"We smoke Camels because we know tobacco," tobacco planters say

Floyd Smither, who grows tobacco, says: "Last year I grew a handsome crop of tobacco. The Camel people bought the choice lots. I smoke Camels—so do most planters. I *know* the quality tobacco that goes in them."

Harry C. King, a successful grower for twenty years, says: "Camel bought the choice lots of my last tobacco crop paid more for them. So I know they use finer, more expensive tobaccos in Camels. That's why Camel is my cigarette."